

PRIORITY-AREA CONSENSUS CONFERENCING: PEER VERSUS  
ONE-TO-ONE, A STUDY OF AN EFFICIENT METHOD FOR  
ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN FRESHMAN  
WRITING APPREHENSION AND WRITING SKILL

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The School of Graduate Studies  
Drake University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Arts

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by  
Robert H. Loken  
March 1985

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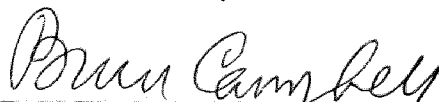
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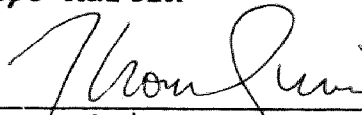
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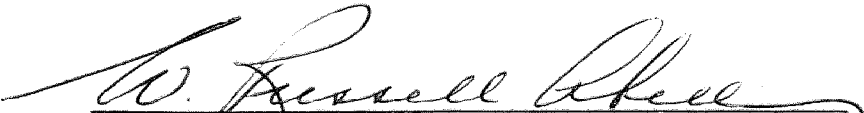
  
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An abstract of a Dissertation by  
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March 1985  
Drake University  
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The problem. For economic reasons, some college administrators are overburdening composition instructors with teaching loads beyond those recommended by NCTE and ADE. In response, this study measures the effectiveness of two methods of teaching composition (peer conferencing and one-to-one conferencing), hypothesizing that peer review will be as effective as teacher review for students and more efficient for the instructor who assigns longer writing tasks than Roger Garrison and Kenneth Bruffee generally recommend.

Procedure. Attempts were made to match fifty control (teacher review) and fifty experimental (peer review) students by sex, age, career interests, English ACT scores, English GPA scores, composite ACT scores, and composite GPA scores. The same strategies were used to arrive at the same consensus conferencing strategies in both groups. The effectiveness of these strategies was determined by pre- and post-test essays, using Miles Myer's recommendations for preparation and scoring, and also by Daly-Miller apprehension pre- and post-test scoring.

Findings. Pre- and post-test writing and apprehension means were approximately the same for either group. Overall writing score increases were significant at  $p < .05$ . Overall apprehension decreases were significant at  $p < .01$ . Females on the average had higher writing scores ( $p < .01$ ) than males, but males showed a significantly greater decrease in apprehension ( $p < .01$ ) than females. Teacher review consumed about 150 more hours of the instructor's time than peer review.

Conclusion. Composition teachers overburdened by teaching loads beyond those recommended by NCTE and ADE can feel confident about peer conferencing. It appears to be as effective as one-to-one for students and more efficient for the instructor.

Recommendation. A research team might discover significant conferencing strategies by matching students at various apprehension levels with students at various writing levels, comparing their conferencing protocols (transcribed from audio-visuals) with "thinking-aloud protocols," and by using many of the pre- and post-testing procedures of the present study.

## Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables . . . . .	v
Chapter	
I. Introduction . . . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
The Purpose . . . . .	2
Background: Theory and Practice . . . . .	8
Conferences . . . . .	8
Writing Tasks . . . . .	18
Consensus Conferencing . . . . .	22
II. Major Components of Priority Conferencing . . .	25
Content/Focus Conferences . . . . .	26
Voice/Audience Conferences . . . . .	31
Organization/Coherence Conferences . . . . .	39
Style/Mechanics Conferences . . . . .	44
Brainstorming Conferences . . . . .	54
Moffett and Macrorie Writing Tasks . . . . .	55
III. Measurement Design . . . . .	80
Group Description . . . . .	80
Apprehension Testing Procedure . . . . .	82
Apprehension Scoring Procedures . . . . .	82
Essay Testing Procedures . . . . .	83
Essay Scoring Procedures . . . . .	90

Chapter	Page
IV. Findings . . . . .	95
The Rubric . . . . .	95
Results . . . . .	106
V. Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations . . . . .	114
Conclusions . . . . .	114
Discussion and Recommendations . . . . .	119
Works Cited . . . . .	124
Appendices	
A. Self-Evaluation, Mid-Term, and Final Exam . .	128
B. Description of Classes and Groups . . . . .	134
C. Data Tables . . . . .	139
D. Apprehension Test . . . . .	142
E. Scoring Sheet . . . . .	145
F. Essays . . . . .	147
G. Pre- and Post-test Essay and Apprehension Scores . . . . .	158

## Tables

Table	Page
1. Timing of Various Course Components . . . . .	66
2. Features of Scoring Categories . . . . .	98
3. Repeated Measure Analysis of Writing Apprehension . . . . .	107
4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Counts for Treatment Group, Sex, and Repeated Measures on Apprehension Scores . . .	108
5. Repeated Measure Analysis of Writing Scores . . .	109
6. Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Counts for Treatment Group, Sex, and Repeated Measure on Writing Scores . . . . .	111
7. Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Counts for the Interaction of Treatment Groups by Sex Across Repeated Measures on Writing Scores . . . . .	112
8. Estimates of Hours and Numbers of Control and Experimental Conferences . . . . .	118
9. Ages of Each Class and Group . . . . .	140
10. Career Interests of Each Class and Group . . . .	140
11. English ACT and English GPA of Each Class and Group . . . . .	141
12. Composite ACT and High School GPA of Each Class and Group . . . . .	141
13. Pre- and Post-test Essay and Apprehension Scores . . . . .	159

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### The Problem

Recently the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English published a brochure entitled "Guidelines for the Workload of the College English Teacher." The brochure states: "At a time of great demand for improving the teaching of English, economic pressures and budgetary restriction may tempt administrations to increase teaching loads."<sup>1</sup> After studying several existing workload statements, the College Section made several recommendations relating to the present study, two of which follow:

1. College English teachers should never be assigned more than 12 hours a week of classroom teaching. In fact, the assignments should be less, to provide adequate time for reading and responding to students' writing; for holding individual student conferences; for preparing to teach classes; and for professional growth.
6. . . . .  
No full-time English teacher's load should be composed exclusively of sections of a single course. . . .

<sup>1</sup>Guidelines for the Workload of the College English Teacher (Urbana, IL: College Section, National Council of Teachers of English, 1977), p. 873.



A teacher repeating identical material for the third or fourth time the same day is unlikely to be either creative or responsive to students.<sup>2</sup>

After teaching fifteen semester hours each week for several years (six hours of composition the mornings of Monday, Wednesday, Friday; six hours of composition the afternoons of Monday, Wednesday, Friday; and a three-credit literature course on Tuesdays and Thursdays); and after reading these recommendations of the College Section in 1977, showing them to the appropriate Waldorf College administrators, and failing to achieve any results, this instructor began to search for methods of teaching composition that might be as effective for students, but more efficient for the instructor. That search led to the present study.<sup>3</sup>

### The Purpose

For several years preceding this study, the instructor had used the one-to-one method of conferring with freshman writers. However, he began to believe that peer conferencing would be more efficient for the instructor than one-to-one conferences, particularly when Moffett and Macrorie writing tasks were given to students. (These tasks

<sup>2</sup>Guidelines for the Workload of the College English Teacher, p. 873. The Association of Departments of English (ADE) recommends college English instructors teach no more than twelve hours per week per semester, and no more than three sections per term of composition with no more than twenty-five students per section.

<sup>3</sup>The Waldorf administration recently reduced this load to six hours in composition and six hours in literature per week per semester.

require more lengthy writing from students than those of Ken Bruffee and Roger Garrison and take more conference time.) But two problems stood in the instructor's way. First, the instructor believed that freshmen might generally tend to be less tactful than the instructor when they conferred with freshman writers, increasing their writing apprehension. The instructor also believed that freshmen might generally be confused by abstract conferencing directions handed to them by their instructor.

However, the instructor anticipated that a set of peer conferencing directions, arrived at from a class-teacher consensus, could be devised that would lead to a lowering of excessive writing apprehension and an increase in writing maturity, and would overcome the potential problems mentioned above, since it would likely fall within most students' potential development. It was also anticipated that peer conferencing (arrived at through a class-teacher consensus) would free this instructor and others with similar problems from some of the many hours spent conferring with students and writing comments upon student drafts, enabling them to better cope with increased workloads and still achieve satisfactory classroom results.

Changes in the field were taking place at the time. First, a new writing-process paradigm of teaching composition was emerging, a paradigm focusing upon decentering and socializing the writing process and offering three

methods for doing this: the peer-conference method of Ken Bruffee, Thom Hawkins, Peter Elbow, and others; the class-teacher-interaction method of William E. Coles, Jr.; and, finally, the one-to-one, student-teacher method of Roger Garrison, referred to earlier. Second, two forms of testing writing were beginning to receive wide acceptance: scoring for apprehension, developed by Daly and Miller,<sup>4</sup> and holistic scoring, outlined in Miles Myer's A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, this study measures the effectiveness of two forms of conferencing, anticipating with Bruffee that students "can gain both awareness and support as adequately in a small group of their peers, as from the ministrations of a teacher."<sup>6</sup> Based upon holistically scored pre- and post-test essays and Daly-Miller pre- and post-tests of writing apprehension, this study hypothesizes that freshmen in teacher-guided, peer-conferencing classes (the experimental group) will show at least as much gain in writing improvement and at least as much decrease in writing

<sup>4</sup>John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension," Research in the Teaching of English, 9, No. 3 (Winter 1975), 242-49.

<sup>5</sup>Miles Myers, A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980).

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth Bruffee, "Collaborative Learning: Some Practical Models," College English, 34 (Feb. 1973), 640.

apprehension (WA) as measured in student-teacher, one-to-one conferencing classes (the control group), but that the experimental method will be more efficient for the instructor who uses the longer writing tasks.

This study will also add a few subpoints to its analysis of Bruffee's assertion. Typically, females have writing skills surpassing those of males. It may also be the case that females experience less WA than males.

In brief, then, this study hypothesizes that:

- I. Control and Experimental groups will show no significant differences in WA scores.
  - A. Control and experimental groups will show significant decrease in WA.
  - B. Female students will show significantly less overall WA than males.
- II. Control and experimental groups will show no significant differences in writing scores.
  - A. Control and experimental groups will show significant improvement in writing.
  - B. Female students will show significantly higher overall writing scores than males.
- III. Peer conferences will be more efficient than one-to-one conferences for the instructor who uses the longer writing tasks.

The key terms of these hypotheses are: writing improvement (writing maturity), writing apprehension, and

efficiency. Maturity means recognizing, accepting, and acting upon the fact others do not see the world as the self does and may need to be accommodated in a variety of ways. In writing, maturity includes the mastery of conventions but means more. It also means the ability to accommodate literate others with the writer's context (content and focus), an appropriate voice, organization, and coherence, etc., and an ability to adapt each of these to the writer's purpose, enabling the audience to transact the writer's intention.

Essentially, apprehension is fear of the unknown. In writing, it expresses itself in a deterioration of the writing processes and/or in writer's block and may be caused by writers' ignorance of techniques for finding a subject and/or generating material, anxieties about facing problems and attempting to solve them, attempts to solve all writing problems in a first draft, comparisons of their writings to professional rather than peer writing, anxieties about sharing their thoughts (and mistakes) with others, etc.

Efficiency refers to the elimination of a major portion of the many hours and numbers of one-to-one office conferences held between writers and their instructor. In-class peer conferences take the place of teacher-review office conferences in the experimental group.

At present, several methods of testing for writing maturity are available, some more complete than others.

Tests of editing skills, for example, test a relatively small part of writing maturity. Some tests, such as multiple choice, may examine each area for what students can recognize, but do not test what students can produce. Essay exams test what students can produce. Widely accepted, holistic scoring (explained in Chapter Three) appears to be our most efficient, valid, and reliable method for evaluating what students produce.

Observational-interview, physiological, and self-report forms of measuring apprehension have been used in the past. However, for the present study, the observer-interview approach was too time-consuming as an in- or out-of-class procedure; the physiological measure (heart beat, galvanic skin response) was too expensive. The self-report instrument (used in this study and discussed in Chapter Three) has neither of these problems, is widely used in composition, and is apparently reliable and valid.

The third term, "efficiency," will be evaluated through a comparison of the hours and numbers of teacher-review conferences held for students in each group. However, the efficiency of the peer-review approach should be self-evident.

## Background: Theory and Practice

### Conferences

Two major writing problems confront instructors of composition: writer-based prose and writing apprehension. The mental base of writer-based prose, cognitive egocentricity (an embeddedness in one's point of view, or one's own point in space and time), finds its way into writing in numerous ways. In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English in May of 1979, Lee Odell suggested that egocentric writers may fail to provide a context for their statements, fail to base an argument on something other than personal wishes, fail to base an argument on values an audience is likely to share, fail to elaborate global impressions, fail to focus or manipulate focus, fail to recognize limitations in a point of view, and fail to anticipate and respond to questions an audience is likely to have.<sup>7</sup> One can add other features to Odell's list, including the writer's failure to choose a voice appropriate to achieve an intended effect upon an audience as well as the failure to choose a subject appropriate to the audience and/or occasion.

Egocentricity may also be indicated by specific

<sup>7</sup> Lee Odell, Redefining "Mature Writing," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English, Ottawa, 1979 (ERIC ED 173 781), pp. 10-16.

features in writing, such as a lack of qualifiers, word chains, logical connectives, sentence variety, transitional words and paragraphs, by ambiguous referents, dangling modifiers, and sentence fragments. It may also be indicated by nonstandard punctuation, sentence structure, indentation, and spelling.

Obviously, then, decentering students (helping them overcome cognitive egocentricity) creates numerous problems for both the instructor and the immature writer. For the writer, the sheer number of problems can be overwhelming, resulting in excessive writing apprehension. The instructor must focus on one problem at a time. Choosing priority areas upon which to focus and sequencing them in some way that follows the natural writing process of a student is a severe problem for the instructor.

The problem is one of defining one's objective, analyzing its parts, and adapting these to freshman writers. Linda Flower has defined the objective used in this study; John C. Mellon has analyzed the various competencies of the objective, and Roger Garrison and others have developed methods adapted to freshmen for bringing about the objective and goals.

Linda Flower distinguishes between Writer-Based prose (characterized earlier as cognitive egocentric writing) and Reader-Based prose. Reader-Based prose, she explains,



creates a shared language and shared context between writer and reader. . . . In its language and structure, Reader-Based prose reflects the purpose of the writer's thought. Writer-Based prose tends to reflect its process. Good writing, therefore, is often the cognitively demanding transformation of the natural, but private expressions of Writer-Based thought into a structure and style adapted to a reader.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, few freshmen will be able to reach the objective of Reader-Based prose after one semester of training. More realistically, the objective is to move them along a continuum toward Reader-Based prose.

John C. Mellon points out in his "Taxonomy of Compositional Competencies," five categories of Reader-Based competencies. An awareness of Reader-Based competencies gives an instructor guidance regarding the goals of conferences. These competencies are:

1. Lexical and Sentential Competencies
2. Discourse Competencies
3. Psychological Competencies
4. Competencies in Conforming to "The Rules of the Writing Game"
5. Habit Structures and Self-Governance.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Linda Flower, "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing," College English, 41 (Sept. 1979), 20.

<sup>9</sup>John C. Mellon, "A Taxonomy of Compositional Competencies," in Perspectives on Literacy, eds. Richard Beach and P. David Pearson (Minneapolis: College of Education, Univ. of Minnesota, 1978), pp. 258-64.

It may be unrealistic, also, to expect freshmen to achieve these competencies in one semester. The task of the present study, therefore, was to design a taxonomy through a teacher-guided consensus with freshmen, one that would be less intimidating because it was more achievable; yet, one that approached Mellon's ideal. That taxonomy is described in Chapter II.

Moving writers from Writer-Based to Reader-Based prose assumes some kind of writing process. Linda Flower and John R. Hayes have described four kinds of intra-actional processes (writers talking to themselves) used by effective writers:

1. Planning: generating ideas, organizing, goal setting
2. Translating ideas into language
3. Reviewing: evaluating, revising, clarifying goals
4. Monitoring: switching between processes.<sup>10</sup>

The present study assumes, however, that inexperienced writers may need help carrying out these processes, and what better help than real readers.

Roger Garrison has developed priority areas in which readers can help inexperienced writers with these four

<sup>10</sup>Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," College Composition and Communication, 32 (Dec. 1981), 372-75.

processes. Thomas Carnicelli has summarized Garrison's priority areas where the writer's processes can be aided by the reader: "content (ideas and information), point of view (purpose, persona, audience), organization, style (diction and syntax), and mechanics (grammar and punctuation)." <sup>11</sup>

Garrison's point is to focus on first things first. In other words, when a writer has Writer-Based problems with mechanics and content, the reader's function is to focus on content first, helping the writer to create Reader-Based content. After a new draft has been written, and the content problem has been resolved, the reader helps the writer through a point-of-view conference, etc.

The reader's function, then, is to help the writer plan and/or translate, review and/or monitor a piece of writing during a content conference, a point-of-view conference, an organization conference, etc.

Besides the five types of priority-area conferences mentioned above, Garrison also holds brainstorming conferences with students. During these conferences, Garrison assists students in writing lists about their subjects.

<sup>11</sup>Thomas Carnicelli, "The Writing Conference: One-to-One Conversation," in Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition, eds. Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980), p. 103.

Listing, he contends, is an extremely important first step in writing, for it not only identifies what a student knows and does not know about a subject, but also helps the student become specific later on.<sup>12</sup>

These types of priority-area conferencing were incorporated into control and experimental classes (with slight modification because of the large number of students) and were labeled as follows: Brainstorming, Content/Focus, Voice/Audience, Organization/Coherence, and Style/Mechanics. These were incorporated along with several suggestions from other composition professionals.

A brief discussion of Brainstorming, Voice/Audience and conferencing in general will illustrate how Garrison's priority areas were adapted to students of the present study.

Several brainstorming strategies besides listing have been developed by others to help insure that students become engaged with their subjects. For instance, Janice Lauer asks students to verbalize a "felt" dissonance in subjects they have chosen. To achieve this end, she coaches them with a strategy, asking them to "state the elements in the subject which clash with their values or exceed their expectations." Also, she asks them to "formulate a question to direct

<sup>12</sup>Roger Garrison, "One-to-One: Tutorial Instruction in Freshman Composition," New Directions for Community Colleges, 2, No. 1 (1974), 64-65.

their search for a resolution."<sup>13</sup> Then, to discover and state a focus, she asks her students to formulate "the insight into a two-part focus: (1) the subject or part of the subject that appears important and (2) the point of significance, the new understanding."<sup>14</sup> Students in experimental and control classes worked on these engagement strategies first alone and then in brainstorming conferences.

To help them engage while exploring their subjects, Lauer offers them a simplified tagmemic approach, adapted from Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike. For students who may have difficulty with the abstractness of the tagmemic strategy, however, as did many of those in the experimental and control classes of this study, other strategies such as freewriting, listing, issue trees, etc., seemed to be more helpful. To help students find subjects about which to write, the instructor gave students in both groups value clarification sheets, lists of possible subjects, and freewriting directions to supplement Lauer's advice.

After choosing a subject, inexperienced writers often

<sup>13</sup>Janice M. Lauer, "The Rhetorical Approach: Stages of Writing and Strategies for Writers," in Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition, eds. Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980), p. 56.

<sup>14</sup>Lauer, p. 59.

begin immediately to write for their audience. This presents them with the problem of overload. Freewriting, listing, issue trees, etc., not only seem to lower excessive writing apprehension by temporarily eliminating students' eventual need to adapt their writing to an audience, to Reader-Based prose, but listing and issue trees also provide students with visible skeletons of their thinking, thus enabling them to add or subtract without the necessity of first composing entire pages or paragraphs.

During Voice Conferences, writers were asked questions like those interspersed throughout The Plural I by William E. Coles, Jr. Coles asks questions of writer and classmates such as: Who is talking in this paper? Do any of you talk this way? How much did this writer care what he was writing about? How much interest would you have in someone speaking in the voice of this paper? Is this the best voice this writer could have chosen?<sup>15</sup>

To help lower excessive writing apprehension, two of Ken Bruffee's suggestions were incorporated into the general structure of priority conferencing. First, Bruffee asks peer critics to mention the strengths before pointing out what each writer could do to improve the paper.<sup>16</sup> Second,

<sup>15</sup>William E. Coles, Jr., The Plural I (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978).

<sup>16</sup>Kenneth Bruffee, "The Brooklyn Plan: Attaining Intellectual Growth Through Peer-Group Tutoring," Liberal Education, 64 (Dec. 1978), 458.

as the semester progresses, and after students have become acquainted, Bruffee asks peer critics to examine the content, agreeing or disagreeing with the position a writer has taken, judging whether or not a writer has used the best possible arguments.<sup>17</sup>

No attempt was made in the present study to examine the effectiveness of a Garrison, Coles or Bruffee approach per se, largely because the students (ranging between remedial and non-remedial) and/or the Moffett writing tasks of this study were dissimilar to those of the other approaches. Garrison points out that his program was designed largely for remedial students.<sup>18</sup> Also, in its study of the Garrison approach, the Los Angeles Community College District concluded that "remedial classes gained significantly more than Freshman English classes between pretest and posttest."<sup>19</sup>

Yet, it may be a mistake to reject Garrison's entire program for other than remedial students. Thomas A. Carnicelli, for instance, points out that questions asked within Garrison's priority areas during out-of-class, student-teacher conferences and about longer papers, have

<sup>17</sup>Bruffee, "The Brooklyn Plan," p. 459.

<sup>18</sup>Garrison, "One-to-One: Tutorial Instruction in Freshman Composition," pp. 55-57.

<sup>19</sup>Jo An McGuire Simmons, "Testing the Effectiveness of the One-to-One Method of Teaching Composition: Improvement of Learning in English Project" (Los Angeles Community College District, 1979), p. 6.

proven successful for teachers who have used them.<sup>20</sup> Support for using priority conferencing is also found in peer-conference approaches. Janice Lauer, for instance, recommends using priority conferences for classes of peer critics.<sup>21</sup>

Coles describes his freshmen as "extraordinarily committed, highly professionalized students of science."<sup>22</sup> As a result, his teaching approach takes a quite different turn than the approach under study. For instance, using a class-teacher conference, Coles distributes mimeographed copies of a student's essay (in the same class as the student writer), and focuses comments upon the essay and writer while the entire class participates in the interaction. In the present study, exercises external to the control and experimental classes were used during class-teacher conferences to avoid arousing excessive apprehension in timid writers who might dread the experience if their own products were under the scrutiny of the entire class.

Ken Bruffee tested his A Short Course in Writing on audiences of junior high students, academically

<sup>20</sup>Carnicelli, p. 105.

<sup>21</sup>Lauer, pp. 61-64.

<sup>22</sup>William E. Coles, Jr., Composing II (Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1981), p. 1.



disadvantaged college students, and community college students.<sup>23</sup> To meet their learning needs, he designed writing tasks that followed the three-paragraph model.<sup>24</sup> His tasks are directed to students apparently somewhat less developed in their writing than the students of the present study.

Though each of these approaches is apparently effective with appropriate student audiences, none of them is quite designed for the students of the present study.

### Writing Tasks

Rather than assigning the writing tasks of Garrison, Coles, or Bruffee, writing tasks from James Moffett and Ken Macrorie were assigned, not because they have been empirically shown to be more effective than other types (no type has), but because they (1) allow students to play with relatively low-level abstractions; (2) offer students assistance with organization; (3) allow students to choose their own aims, voices, and audiences; and (4) perhaps most importantly, allow students to write from their own experiences.

Regarding the first point, Karl K. Taylor writes:

Research conducted by science educators . . . shows that many young adults have not reached the formal level of operations; instead they operate at the concrete or at a transitional point somewhere between the

<sup>23</sup>Kenneth Bruffee, A Short Course in Writing, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Winthrop, Inc., 1980), p. vii.

<sup>24</sup>Bruffee, A Short Course in Writing, p. xiii.

concrete and formal levels. Representatives of these studies are Campbell (1977), Dunlap and Fazio (1976), Griffiths (1976), and McKinnon and Renner (1971). . . . They measured whether students could grasp scientific phenomena. None directly investigated the rhetorical modes.<sup>25</sup>

Until more is known about the rhetorical modes, it may not be too presumptuous to relate to them the same conclusions. If so, assigning highly abstract forms (such as, combine several generalizations to come up with a theory) or highly theoretical subjects (women's rights) may be expecting too much of most freshmen.<sup>26</sup> However, to accommodate the more capable students of this study, such tasks were given as optional and rewarded by extra points.

About organization, Robert J. Bracewell points out that readers generally read for meaning and not for form, that for most readers, form is, in effect, subsidiary. Consequently, to paraphrase him, including directions within an assignment about the form the task is to follow

<sup>25</sup>Karl K. Taylor, "A Community College English Program: A Competencies Model," in Three Language-Arts Curriculum Models: Pre-Kindergarten through College, ed. Barrett J. Mandel (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980), p. 175.

<sup>26</sup>James Britton suggests one form that may be effective with most freshmen. He writes that the form of the "generalized narrative . . . may be a category which represents the first efforts of an immature writer to break away from the particular [from the concrete stage of development]." This form is similar to the form chosen for the pre- and post-test essays of the present study. See James Britton et al., The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18) (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 95-96.

may be a significant way to make the subsidiary explicit and thus help students to resolve one of their principal writing problems--that of immature structure, organization, or form.<sup>27</sup> While they write, following directions about form, freshmen may, in fact, be enabled to internalize structure, freeing them to focus upon other writing processes.

Students were also encouraged throughout the semester to vary their voices, aims, and audiences from essay to essay. Encouragement was given based upon the assumption that by experimenting with many variations, later on, students would likely approach any Reader-Based problem more confidently and successfully.

Essentially, writers were enabled to experiment in two ways. First, they were informed they could write with any voice of their choosing (objective, dogmatic, humorous, etc.), with any aim of their choosing (informative, persuasive, entertaining, etc.), and to any audience of their choosing (children, peers, middle-aged adults, etc.). Second, readers (peers and teacher) role played the writer's audience when responding to the paper during conferences, helping the writer choose the most effective voice and aim, even suggesting on occasion a change in audience--say, from peer to administration, or to an unknown, general

<sup>27</sup>Robert J. Bracewell, "Writing as a Cognitive Activity," Invisible Language, 14, No. 4 (Nov. 1980), 418-19.

audience.

James Britton and his research team support this approach. They state: "Work in school ought to equip a writer to choose his own target audience and, eventually, to be able, when the occasion arises, to write as someone with something to say to the world in general."<sup>28</sup> If "the world in general" is the ultimate audience of Reader-Based prose, then this approach would seem an effective way of moving students toward it and, perhaps, less threatening to many students than writing only to a teacher-judge.

Regarding point four, several authorities in composition research, ranging from James Britton to Gordon Wells, from Janet Emig to John Mellon, each argue that students be allowed to choose subjects from their own experience. As Britton puts it in Language and Learning,

Perhaps one of the first ways in which adolescents begin to achieve through their writing a maturer view of themselves and the world is by looking back into their own childhood. . . . To realize its continuity with the present may help a sense of order to grow, an order embracing past and present, and providing, at times, a key to the solution of some of the riddles they are now confronting.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Britton, The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), p. 192.

<sup>29</sup> James Britton, Language and Learning (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 253.

One might ask how students can be expected to understand the history of nations, for example, if they cannot understand their own.

At least one study has supported Britton's point. Janet Emig, referring to it, writes:

We are acquiring . . . some empirical confirmation about the importance of engagement in, as well as self-selection of, a subject for the student learning to write and writing to learn. The recent Sanders and Littlefield study, reported in RTE, is persuasive evidence on this point.<sup>30</sup>

Because they follow these four areas of advice, the same writing tasks from James Moffett and Ken Macrorie were given to the experimental and control groups of this study. These writing tasks are designed for that area between concrete and formal development, give directions about the form the task is to follow, allow students to write with a variety of aims and voices to a variety of audiences, and allow students to choose their own experiential subjects.

### Consensus Conferencing

Two strategies for helping students toward Reader-Based prose and lowering excessive writing apprehension (teacher-guided, consensus conferencing and student-model

<sup>30</sup> Janet Emig, "Writing as a Mode of Learning," in The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook, eds. Gary Tate and Edward P. J. Corbett (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 75.

essays) were based upon Lev Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development. (Vygotsky was a developmental psychologist whose work has influenced James Britton, Janet Emig, and others.)

Vygotsky defines the zone of proximal development in the following way:

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. . . . A child's actual developmental level defines functions that have already matured, that is, the end products of development. . . . The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state.<sup>31</sup>

Based upon this concept, the instructor reasoned that student-model essays would likely range closer to the zone of proximal development of most students than professional-model essays, and would thus be less threatening to them. To illustrate how modeling was done, after the instructor or a student read the directions for a particular essay, one or the other would read a student-model essay that had "fulfilled" those directions. Then, the essay was posted on the classroom bulletin board for student reference. Often

<sup>31</sup>L. S. Vygotsky, Mind in Society (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 86.

more than one essay was read and posted. None, however, were read or posted without the author's prior permission.

The instructor also reasoned that a teacher-guided consensus with students about the content of priority conferences would likely achieve more favorable results in writing growth and confidence than an abstract set of conferencing directions, authored by the instructor, with help from Flower, Mellon, Garrison, Coles, Bruffee, and others, but with little or no input from students. It was anticipated that such a consensus would range closer to the zones of proximal development of most, if not all, students.

## CHAPTER II

### Major Components of Priority Conferencing

Experimental and control groups used the same strategies for reaching Reader-Based prose and lowering excessive writing apprehension. However, three problems were present in the research design, relating to priority-area conferencing. Regarding the first two, peer readers had to offer the same kinds of advice and in the same way during experimental priority-area conferencing as the instructor offered during control, priority-area conferencing. To solve these problems, experimental and control classes were given the same exercises, and, after class-teacher discussion, arrived at a consensus with the instructor about priority conferencing concerns for each area. The third problem was that control classes might confer about their writing with peers outside class. As a solution, control and experimental classes were not given typed, consensus guide sheets for priority conferencing. Instead, experimental classes were reminded of the consensus orally and on the blackboard. The instructor used typed, consensus guide sheets to remind him of the consensus during control conferencing.



Content/Focus Conferences

To illustrate how the first two problems were resolved, the instructor gave experimental and control classes an exercise draft relating to a content/focus conference. Through class-teacher interaction, the instructor asked both groups to identify with the writer, to feel what it was probably like to have written the draft. To achieve this, students were asked who their audience was, what their aim was, and what type of voice they were writing with. Both groups were also asked what kinds of advice they would want readers to give and how they would want it given if they had asked for help with the exercise draft. The exercise draft follows:

Terry

The year was 1970, the season, winter, and the gradeschool year, fourth grade. I was ten years old and fairly sizeable boy at the time. The only problem was that there was another boy, a sixth grader to be exact, who was bigger then I was and he decided that I was the perfect specimen to beat up and pick on to show his friends he was hot stuff. Being the person I was, I wouldn't stand for it at first but after getting beaten up and thrown around awhile, I soon realized I was no match for him. I was scared! The whole winter dragged on as a result of this fear. Every lunch hour was wasted for my activities included hiding under cars in hope that my adversary would not see me. It got quite damp and cold just lying there, peering through openings under the car. I was very lucky that someone hadn't decided to drive somewhere for I would have been flattened like a pancake. Not only that but I probably would've been killed.

The year was finally over and I knew I could breathe. This sixth grader would be in high

school and I wouldn't have to see him for a while.

Both he and I are much older now and every once in a while I see him in the distance. Each time that happens, I remember those days in fourth grade. I doubt if he remembers what happened but then again, he wasn't the one who was scared.<sup>1</sup>

After a brief and somewhat puzzled discussion, students were given a copy of a revision of the Terry paper (without corrections) and were asked which of the papers they preferred. The revision follows:

#### Terry

The year was 1970, the season; winter, and year in school; fourth grade. I was ten years old and a fairly big kid at the time. School had been going well until one day in November. It was from this day on, throughout the rest of the school year, that I experienced something new in my life.

Terry, a sixth grader and a big bully in school, really had it in for me. I'm not real sure how it got started or why he chose me to push around, but he did and I had quite a time trying to avoid him. Every day, in some way, he would get at me. That was, of course, if I couldn't keep him from seeing me. Everytime he spotted me, I was scared stiff of what he had in store for me. I had just wished once that I could overpower the stupid jerk. That might have made him think twice on working me over.

All of the things I went through with him had the same tone or theme in them; him being the King Honcho and me, the one he rules over. One time I was leaving the school on my lunch hour to try and find the rest of the gang. Well, Terry saw me walking down the sidewalk. Keeping himself out of my sight, he crept behind me. He was directly behind when he spoke.

<sup>1</sup>Prairie Writing Project, "Terry" (Moorhead, MN: English Department, Moorhead State University, 1980).

"Hey, punk, I want you down on my knees whe I'm around!" As I swung around he kicked my legs out from under me. Collapsing to the ground, I lay there, blood running from my hands and a bruise on my elbow. Getting to my feet, I just looked at him.

"What's the matter?" he babbled, "can't you stay on your feet? Ahh, poor baby! I think it is about time you eat some snow."

Instantly he shoved me to the ground. My face was now buried in snow. With both hands clapsed to my head, he rolled it vigorously, scraping and clawing it, my face ripping with every movement in the icy chunks. The bell rang. It was not until then that he finally quit. I just lay there. My face was a mess but I didn't say anything. Returning to school, I finished the day out.

My hate for Terry became stronger with each day. I was going to stand up to the sucker once and for all. After a week of persecution, my hate for him was at a peak. I could take it for no longer. The next day I saw Terry standing in the hockey rink. Walding up, I waited for him to say just one word to me knowing quite well that he would. He did, and that was all that I needed. My first punch landed in his mouth. He didn't bulge. The second one went for his stomach; NO EFFECT!!! I knew that I had made a mistake as I smashed into the boards of the rink. He started towards me again, his eyes ablaise. I was petrified!! He was not five feet from me when one of his friends yelled, "Terry, not now - a teacher's coming!" Backing off he grunted.

"You're safe for now, you little shit. But you just wait until tomorrow." I knew he meant it. What am I going to do? I thought to myself, I have school every day for the rest of the year. If he doesn't get me one day, he'll get me another.

For the next day and the rest of the year, I began a daily routine of hiding behind trees, snowbanks, under cars, and beneath bushes, any place I could find that would keep me away from Terry's path for I was in constant fear of his wrath. I got very lonely always hiding but I was too scared to do anything else.

The year was finally over and I had managed to escape from Terry's sight. He would be going into seventh grade and a different school. I wouldn't have to see him again for at least a couple of years.

Now, at 18, eight and a half years later, things have changed. Whenever I see Terry, I vividly remember my ordeal in fourth grade. But the difference is that I no longer have the hate I had for him. I am a Christian and have forgiven him of anything in the past. This is the lord's will. Besides, I doubt if Terry even remembers those happenings. He wasn't the one who was scared.<sup>2</sup>

Invariably, students preferred the revision. Then, after looking over the earlier draft once again, the instructor asked students (as they role-played the paper's audience) what kind of advice they would give the writer and how they would give it to help him reach the revision he had achieved.

In both experimental and control classes, a guided consensus was soon reached. The consensus consisted of the following concerns, relating to the "what" of the content conference:

1. Point out to the writer interesting places in the paper where you would like to know more.
2. If confused in any parts of the paper, ask the writer what was meant.
3. If the writer seems to write about things not relating to the purpose, indicate this to the writer.

A guided consensus was also reached relating to "how" the "what to say" could be expressed in a content conference. The consensus consisted of the following concerns:

<sup>2</sup>Prairie Writing Project, n.p.

1. Get to know each other better so a sense of trust develops.
2. Tell the writer first what you especially liked about the paper.
3. When criticizing, write comments on the draft in pencil.
4. Thank each other for sharing and helping.

After the consensus was reached, the instructor composed a guide sheet, organizing the consensus concerns. This guide sheet reminded the instructor of the consensus during one-to-one, control-group, content conferencing. It also helped when expressing the consensus orally and on the blackboard to remind experimental classes of the consensus during peer-group, content conferencing. The guide sheet read as follows:

Content/Focus Conference--  
Directions for Audience Role-Play

- A. Writer: Have a draft ready for the content conference, and present it to your reader(s).
- B. Reader: Identify with the writer. Before reading, visit a little, and then ask the writer to tell you about
  1. The audience the paper is meant for,
  2. The purpose of the paper,
  3. The kind of voice s/he was writing with.

Read 5a, b, c, and d below. Then read the paper, twice if necessary. Perhaps it may also help to ask the writer to read it aloud. If you don't notice any problems with content, as in 5a, b, c, and d below, move on to the Voice/Audience conference. Otherwise,

4. Tell the writer what you especially liked about the paper.
5. Focus upon content, role playing the audience, with penciled notes in the margin and talk:
  - a. Point out to the writer interesting places in the paper where you would like to know more.
  - b. If you were confused in any parts of the paper, ask the writer what was meant.
  - c. If the writer seems to write about things not relating to the purpose, indicate this to the writer.
  - d. Later in the semester, point out where you disagree with the writer.

Say your thanks to one another for helping and sharing.

With the assistance of the guide sheet, derived from the class-teacher consensus, the instructor in control classes and peers in experimental classes were enabled to hold the same types of content/focus conferences.

#### Voice/Audience Conferences

To reach a consensus with respect to voice/audience conferences, students in experimental and control classes were given the same voice exercises to familiarize them with the concept of voice. For instance, students were asked to read the following exercise and to identify with (role play) the writer. To achieve this, students were asked who their audience was, what their aim was, and what type of voice they were writing with. The instructor also asked both groups

what kind of advice they would want readers to give and how they would want it given if they had written the letter and wanted help with its voice. The voice exercise follows:

From: Ku Klux Klan and White Citizen Council  
and White Citizens of Alabama

To: Students & Faculty  
University of Michigan

Dear Students & Faculty:

I write for the Ku Klux Klan of Alabama as to a reply and warning to you about the recent letter Governor John received from you recently; We, the people of our great State think that we can run our own affairs and are capable of it without interference of outsiders; We, the people of the State of Alabama are proud of our superb advance in education.

The Coons in our great State of Alabama, have, at present, School facilities above the whites, and also Employment above whites such as at Goodyear, Us. Steel, and Allis Chalmers.

I and the rest of my buddies do not like the present Criticisizing of Governor John he was capable of being one of the Justices and Attorneys for the Nurenburg war Crime Trials.

We are all strong in Alabama there will not be another Little Rock here; We will turn all of our Congressional Medals of Honor and Distinguished Service Crosses in and turn to arms again; In the First Choice I have a 358 Magnum Sniperscope bullet with the head of the N.A.A.C.P.s Name on it. I am a Sharpshooter with all weapons including the Thompson Sub machine Gun, Grease Gun, 30 & 50 Caliber Machine Guns and the others are Qualified with anything from hand Grenades, and Poison Gas; We say Clean up Detroit, and Michigan, and then tell another State how to run its Affairs; Thank you.

(P.S.) N.A.A.C.P. is the Contributors to Communism, Nazism, and such as to cause Chaos

within the Constitution of the United States;  
RED BIRDS DO NOT BUILD THEIR NESTS WITH BLUE  
BIRDS.

Sincerely,  
K.K.K. OF ALABAMA<sup>3</sup>

After a rather excited discussion, a consensus was reached. Students decided that a voice conference with such a writer would probably not succeed, that his aim (purpose) would have to be changed first, perhaps to one of showing Michigan that it was unfair in its criticism of the Governor and asking the state to be more fair in the future.

Students were then asked to role play the faculty and students at Michigan, deciding the effect the letter would have upon its audience. The consensus reached was that a response to such a writer would probably not be meaningful, that the voice seems to contradict itself by being polite in places and threatening in others (maybe because its purpose was not clear), that for this reason the voice is hard to believe: in summary, that the writer probably could have chosen a more effective voice and purpose.

Students were also given other exercises to help them reach a consensus about the concept of voice. The following voice exercise is adapted from Walker Gibson and consists of a series of sentences, proceeding from the more to the

<sup>3</sup>Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike, Rhetoric: Discovery and Change (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1970), pp. 210-11.



less formal. After a student finished reading all of the sentences aloud, students were asked by the instructor to individually rank them from more to less formal (seven equaled most formal and one equaled least formal). In class-teacher interaction, students were asked which tone they would most likely speak or write with to a close friend, to a stranger, to an admissions officer or on an admission's form. The exercise follows:

- \_\_\_ 1. Place of birth: Jacksonville, Fla.  
Date: Jan. 19, 1950.
- \_\_\_ 2. The writer was born in Jacksonville,  
Florida, 19 January 1950.
- \_\_\_ 3. I was born in Jacksonville, Florida, on  
the 19th of January, 1950.
- \_\_\_ 4. I was born in Jacksonville in January,  
1950.
- \_\_\_ 5. Where was I born? Jacksonville, in January  
of 1950.
- \_\_\_ 6. Where was I born, you ask? Right here in  
Jacksonville, back in 1950.
- \_\_\_ 7. You ask where I was born? Why, right  
here in little old Jacksonville. When?  
Oh, about 1950.<sup>4</sup>

One consensus reached after student-teacher discussion was that tones may be adapted to audiences and purposes. Another, that tone may be varied in speaking and in writing,

<sup>4</sup>Walker Gibson, Persona (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 58-59.

and a third, that an informative purpose, for instance, may be written or spoken in many tones--from the highly formal to the highly informal.

Students were given a third voice exercise (also adapted from Gibson) to help them understand the relationship between voice, audience, and aim. The exercise consists of five descriptions of an automobile, each apparently meant for a different audience and/or to achieve a different aim. The attitudes toward the automobile range from highly positive to negative (including neutral), and the tones, from highly formal to highly informal. To help students analyze the various voice possibilities, excluding considerations of audience and aim, students were also given Gibson's "Aristotelian diagram" which was later related to the various descriptions of the automobile:

Audience--Voice--Subject

(A) ----- (V) ----- (S)

The more intimate the tone of the description, the shorter the distance between A and V. If the attitude of the description is positive, the lines between V and S are raised upward; if negative, the lines are moved downward. The following descriptions were used as illustrations, and the diagrams were arrived at through a class-teacher consensus to help control and experimental classes understand the distinctions in conferencing. Students were also asked to speculate about each writer's audience and aim:

1. LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT MOVE-UP CAR? CONSIDER THE PHOENIX CUSTOM SEDAN. WHY? FOR ITS EXTRA-SPECIAL EXTRAS THAT DON'T COST EXTRA. DISTINCTIVE WRAPAROUND FRONT FENDER LIGHTS. TRIPLE TAILLIGHTS AND BUMPER BACKUP LIGHTS. YOU'LL BE SEEN, COMING AND GOING!

Audience?

Aim?

(A) ---- (V) ---- (S)

2. BEFORE CONSIDERING A PHOENIX CUSTOM SEDAN, IT WOULD BE WISE TO BEWARE OF THE EXCESS LIGHTING AT FRONT AND REAR. YOU WILL PROBABLY FEEL FAR TOO CONSPICUOUS IN SUCH A VEHICLE; THE TRIPLE TAILLIGHTS MAY BE LOOKED UPON AS PARTICULARLY OSTENTATIOUS.

Audience?

Aim?

(A) ----- (V) ---- (S)

3. CONSIDERATION OF A PHOENIX CUSTOM SEDAN PRESENTS THE PUTATIVE OWNER WITH A NUMBER OF UNATTRACTIVE FEATURES, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO HEADLIGHTS AND TAILLIGHTS. THE SO-CALLED "WRAPAROUND" FRONT FENDERS ADD UP TO LITTLE MORE THAN AN ADDED OSTENTATION.

Audience?

Aim?

(A) ----- (V) ---- (S)

4. YOU'LL LOVE IT, ALL RIGHT. ALL THAT SHOW-OFF LIGHTING, FORE AND AFT. YOU'LL FEEL LIKE A SHOW-BOAT DRIVING DOWN THE STREET IN THAT NEW PHOENIX--TRIPLE TAILLIGHTS YET!

Audience?

Aim?

(A) ---- (V) ---- (S)

5. UPWARD MOBILITY IN AMERICA IS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY SUCCESSIVE PURCHASES OF NEW AUTOMOBILES. IN MANY GROUPS SOCIAL STATUS MAY BE SYMBOLIZED BY SUCH DESIRABLE FEATURES AS DISTINCTIVE HEADLIGHTS OR MULTIPLE TAILLIGHTS IN "CUSTOM" MODELS.

Audience?

Aim?

(A)----- (V)----- (S)<sup>5</sup>

After reading the above illustrations, and after class-teacher interaction focused upon these exercises, control and experimental students and teacher arrived at a voice/audience consensus on several points: first, that choosing a tone depends upon the relationship the writer wants to establish with an audience; second, that choosing an attitude (honest or dishonest) depends upon how the writer feels about the subject and/or audience. Students also noticed that attitudes and tones toward the same subject vary when aims and audiences vary, and that attitudes and tones may often tell a reader more about the writer than about the subject, particularly as in the KKK letter.

Eventually, through class-teacher interaction, students arrived at a consensus regarding voice conferences. The consensus consisted of the same how concerns expressed in the content conferences, but of a new set of what concerns, derived from the voice consensus. The what concerns consisted of the following:

<sup>5</sup>Gibson, pp. 70-73.

1. Describe to the writer the kind of person this voice (tone and attitude) sounds like.
2. If the voice doesn't seem to be the kind the writer described earlier in the conference, point out where the voice feels different.
3. If you think the writer could have chosen a better voice in places, show where and how.
4. If the voice is hard to believe in places, point those places out to the writer.
5. If you notice places where the writer could have taken more of a risk, point those places out.

Again, the instructor composed a guide sheet which organized the consensus concerns. This guide sheet reminded the instructor of the consensus during one-to-one, control-group, voice/audience conferencing. It also helped when expressing the consensus orally and on the blackboard to remind experimental classes of the consensus during peer-group, voice/audience conferencing. The guide sheet reads as follows:

Voice/Audience Conference--  
Directions for Audience Role-Play

- A. Writer: Have a draft ready for the content conference, and present it to your reader(s).
- B. Reader: Identify with the writer. Before reading, visit a little, and then ask the writer to tell you about
  1. The audience the paper is meant for,

2. The purpose of the paper,
3. The kind of voice s/he was writing with.

Read 5a, b, c, d, and e below. Then read the paper, twice if necessary. Perhaps it may also help to ask the writer to read it aloud. If you don't notice any problems with voice as in 5a, b, c, d, and e below, move on to the Organization/Coherence Conference. Otherwise:

4. Tell the writer what you especially liked about the paper.
5. Focus upon voice, role playing the audience, with penciled notes in the margin and talk:
  - a. Describe to the writer the kind of person this voice sounds like.
  - b. If the voice doesn't seem to be the kind the writer described earlier, point out where the voice feels different.
  - c. If you think the writer could have chosen a better voice in places, show where and how.
  - d. Later in the semester, if the voice is hard to believe in places, point those places out to the writer.
  - e. Also, later in the semester, if you notice places where the writer could have taken more of a risk, point those places out.

Say your thanks for helping and sharing.

#### Organization/Coherence Conferences

To help control and experimental students reach a consensus for organization/coherence conferences, students were again given a series of exercises for class-teacher interaction.

The first exercise was an example of pathological

writing. Again both groups were asked to identify with (role play) the writer by responding to such concerns as who their audience was, what their aim was, and what type of voice they were writing with. Both groups were also asked what kinds of advice they would want readers to give and how they would want it given if they had asked for help with the "coherence" draft. The "coherence" draft follows:

I am the President of the United States. I will be the last President. I will not be present because I am not a resident of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania in Transylvania. Transcontinental trains are the best kind. In trains when it rains. Rains in April bring May flowers. Flour makes bread. Cast your bread upon the water. Blood is thicker than water. I am of royal blood. Red blood, black blood, black power. I am the most powerful except for policemen and police dogs. The German Shepherd was the best dog this year.<sup>6</sup>

As was anticipated by the instructor, students were unable to determine either the aim or audience of the writing. Regarding advice, students felt they needed more training to help the writer. Invariably, however, students became more aware of the meaning of coherence and of the need for it if they were to achieve their aims with their audiences.

Also, a second set of coherence exercises was given to both groups of students for class-teacher interaction. These exercises illustrated that premature closure is a major cause of incoherence, resulting in what appears to be a lack

<sup>6</sup>Frank J. D'Angelo, A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric (Cambridge: Winthrop, 1975), p. 50.

of purpose and/or a lack of audience awareness. Students were asked to role play the writer by telling the class what the writer's point (aim) was. The exercise follows:

Success sounds like a lot of hard work. Successful people delight in taking challenges and surmounting them elegantly. Weights of money, prestige and desire are often attached to our notions of success. In a social environment it is easy to select the better. The one flashing his teeth in every direction and making gross comments is not successful.<sup>7</sup>

Invariably, control and experimental students were unable to reach a wide consensus about the writer's aim. The following statement came closest to such a consensus: Success is worth hard work. Using this statement as a base, and so students could see that the writer "stopped too soon," the instructor then asked students through discussion how they would revise the paragraph to make that point.

The next coherence exercise focused upon lack of audience awareness. Students were asked to role play the reader by telling the class where they became confused. The exercise follows:

A good engineer knows how to structure his thoughts. Lawyers like engineers rely on basic principles to formulate convincing arguments. In law there are certain inalienable rights and statutes of law assure us against anarchy. In engineering these take the form of immutable laws that govern the physical world. Principles like conservation of energy or momentum are powerful ideas.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Anita Brostoff, "Coherence: 'Next to' Is Not 'Connected to,'" College Composition and Communication, 32, No. 3 (Oct. 1981), 280.

<sup>8</sup>Brostoff, p. 281.



Students pointed out that the sentences do not clearly connect to one another, that something is missing. Students then were asked to take a few minutes to imagine they were holding a conference with this writer, to underline where they became confused and to suggest one or two possible additions to the piece that might help the writer. Following this, the instructor gave students copies of a revision of the paragraph so they could discover that key words and transitions can make a paragraph more clear for the audience. The modifications were underlined for them as in the following:

A good engineer knows how to structure his thoughts in order to formulate convincing arguments. Like a lawyer, the engineer relies on basic principles. Just as in law there are certain inalienable rights and statutes that assure us against anarchy, so in engineering there are immutable laws that govern the physical world. For example, engineers use powerful ideas like conservation of energy or momentum in their thinking and arguing.<sup>9</sup>

The consensus reached by both groups was that writers need to make it clear to a reader how the thought moves from one sentence to the next so readers don't get lost.

The Terry first draft (page 26) was used again as an illustration, this time to help both groups and the instructor arrive at a consensus for organization. Both groups were asked to examine the draft from the reader's viewpoint and to focus upon the beginning, middle, and end, looking

<sup>9</sup>Brostoff, p. 281.

for problems. The first consensus related to the introduction, that a paragraph indentation could have come earlier and that the new first paragraph could have contained more about the paper's point. In other words, readers felt a little lost in the introduction. About the conclusion, students felt that it did not quite conclude, that it left them hanging, like more needed to be said. Though they wanted more information in the middle, they pointed out that the middle was organized chronologically, like a story, and that this order helps more than it interferes with getting the meaning across to the reader.

As a result of this interaction, the consensus reached included the following points: that readers should not feel lost at the beginning of a paper, nor should they feel left dangling at the end.

Again, the instructor composed a guide sheet (for the reasons mentioned earlier) which organized the consensus concerns. The guide sheet reads as follows:

Organization/Coherence Conference  
Directions for Audience Role-Play

- A. Writer: Have a draft ready for the organization/coherence conference, and present it to your reader(s).
- B. Reader: Identify with the writer. Before reading, visit a little, and then ask the writer to tell you about
  - 1. The audience the paper is meant for,
  - 2. The purpose of the paper,

3. The kind of voice s/he was writing with

Read 5a, b, c, d, and e below. Then read the paper, twice if necessary. Perhaps it may also help to ask the writer to read it aloud. If you don't notice any problems with organization/coherence, as in 5a, b, c, d, and e below, move on to the Style/Mechanics Conference. Otherwise

4. Tell the writer what you especially liked about the paper.
5. Focus upon organization/coherence, role playing the audience, with penciled notes in the margin and talk:
  - a. If the beginning of the paper does not begin it, point out where you get lost.
  - b. If the ending of the paper does not end it, point out what might be done so you are not left dangling.
  - c. If you get lost when moving from one paragraph to the next, point out where this happens.
  - d. If the order of the information confuses you, show the writer where this happens.
  - e. If you get lost when moving from one sentence to the next, point out where this happens.

Say your thanks for helping and sharing.

### Style-Mechanics Conferences

To reach a consensus with respect to style/mechanics conferences, students in experimental and control classes were given the same style/mechanics exercises to familiarize them with these issues. First, however, the concept of sentence combining was explained to students by means of the following exercise in style, adapted from Kellogg W. Hunt:

## Sentence Combining Rationale

- 1 Aluminum is a metal.
- 2 It is abundant.
- 3 It has many uses.
- 4 It comes from bauxite.
- 5 Bauxite is an ore.
- 6 Bauxite looks like clay.

Fourth Grade: Aluminum is a metal and it is abundant. It has many uses and it comes from bauxite. Bauxite is an ore and looks like clay.

Eighth Grade: Aluminum is an abundant metal, has many uses, and comes from bauxite. Bauxite is an ore that looks like clay.

Skilled Adult: Aluminum, an abundant metal with many uses comes from bauxite, a clay-like ore.

## Aluminum

Directions: Read the passage all the way through. You will notice that the sentences are short and choppy. Study the passage and then rewrite it in a better way. You may combine sentences, change the order of words, and omit words that are repeated too many times. But try not to leave out any of the information.

Aluminum is a metal. It is abundant. It has many uses. It comes from bauxite. Bauxite is an ore. Bauxite looks like clay. Bauxite contains aluminum. It contains several other substances. Workmen extract these other substances from the bauxite. They grind the bauxite. They put it in tanks. Pressure is in the tanks. The other liquid remains. They put it through several other processes. It finally yields a chemical. The chemical is powdery. It is white. The chemical is alumina. It is a mixture. It contains aluminum. It contains oxygen. Workmen separate the aluminum from the oxygen. They use electricity. They finally produce a metal. The metal is light. It has a luster. The luster is bright. The luster is silvery. This metal comes in many forms.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Kellogg W. Hunt, "Early Blooming and Late Blooming Syntactic Structures," in Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging, eds. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977), pp. 94-95, 103.

Students were asked to read the six sentences in the upper left of the exercise, then to read the three versions. After completing their reading, students were asked to vote for the version they preferred by a show of hands (the labels were missing on the student version of this exercise). Invariably, most students preferred the version written by the skilled adult.

Following this, students were asked to complete the sentence-combining exercise on the bottom half of the exercise sheet, each student working alone. Then, upon completion, two students in each section were asked to read their versions to the entire class, alternately each reading one sentence, to help students see that more than one way of combining the sentences is possible.

Following this exercise, students were asked what the benefits of sentence combining are from the point of view of a reader. Invariably, students in both groups pointed out that sentence combining results in sentences that are less "jerky" and in fewer words for the reader to struggle over. These two points were later added to the style/mechanics guide sheet.

Students were also given a series of sentence models, derived from student writing, and asked which they preferred in each grouping and why. The sentences follow:

## Sentence Models

1. Figures of Speech:

- a. Mother Nature is a two-faced woman.
- b. Love is like a kaleidoscope, never the same design twice.
- c. Thinking is like a cold engine; it's very useful but hard to get started.

2. Because-Whereas:

- a. I like walking in the evening, because it is peaceful and serene; whereas in the day, there is the hustle and bustle of people chasing time.
- b. I always live for today because I know it's here, whereas if I live for tomorrow, it may never come.
- c. I keep busy because it gives time wings, whereas when I am lazy, time drags its feet.

3. Parallelism:

- a. Schools serve for an education, for rehabilitation, and for determination.
- b. A blizzard is a time for getting things done, for relaxing, and for getting to know someone.
- c. Feet serve for walking, for running, and for athlete's foot.

4. Inverted Sentences:

- a. Colder than a mid-winter day is my morning shower.
- b. Happiness without a smile is like a movie with no sound.
- c. Cleaner than a cafeteria plate is the mouth of a dog.

5. "Details-first" Sentences:

- a. Miles in the clouds, nervous hands, cold sweat, and a smile bigger than normal: the first date.

- b. Alarms buzzing, tired faces, no one's talking, still some sleeping: dorm mornings.
- c. Rickety boards, peeling paint, broken and boarded up windows, tilted porch and broken chair: this is poverty.

Invariably, students pointed out that the sentences they preferred were most alive, made them pause and think, and that they had impact. This consensus was then added to the guide sheet. Following the discussion, control and experimental groups were given class time to imitate the sentence models and to share their best efforts with the class.

To help students arrive at a consensus regarding mechanics, both groups were given copies of the Subjective Reaction Scale from Carl Koch and James M. Brazil. Both groups were asked to rank their reactions to the various sentences. The instructor also pointed out the appearance of a latent snobbery in this exercise, discussed it with both groups, and decided to choose a replacement the following year. The mechanics exercise follows:

#### Subjective Reaction Scale

Directions: Assume that you are the personnel director in charge of hiring all employees for a large factory and that the following sentences were each written by different people applying for jobs. Assign to each statement the number of the job you think the applicant qualifies for. You wouldn't, of course, hire someone just on the basis of writing ability, but we are here measuring writing qualifications only. Your decision means that the writer could be hired for that job and all jobs below it, but could not--because of his or her writing--hold any jobs above that level.

1. Communications director
2. Office worker
3. Salesperson
4. Factory supervisor
5. Factory worker
6. None of these

- \_\_\_ 1. It's been much too long since we last talked, and I'm really looking forward to your visit.
- \_\_\_ 2. He always be messing around, so I just stop the weakly allowance.
- \_\_\_ 3. Mr. Robbins who lived nest door to us did not pain his house for fifteen years.
- \_\_\_ 4. Baxter didn't like nothing about Army life.
- \_\_\_ 5. I told the s.o.b. I's kick his butt if he didn't leave Sally alone.
- \_\_\_ 6. George say he in trouble over that report.
- \_\_\_ 7. Jerry Rutherford was a broad-faced, heavy-set Irish boy who was the bully of the block, his favorite pastime seemed to be terrorizing boys only half his size.
- \_\_\_ 8. Moses may have led the jews out of egypt, but it was Golda Meir who let the arabs know that isreal sould never be conquered again.
- \_\_\_ 9. I walk to school every day that first year at Barnsely.
- \_\_\_ 10. I have never known anyone who could play chess with Mr. Dodds without losing patience.
- \_\_\_ 11. He was studing hard to learn the issues because he wanted to be elected the class candidate.
- \_\_\_ 12. He was trying to give me a snow job, but I wasn't about to be sucked in.
- \_\_\_ 13. She left the party before anybody. Because she had to be home before midnight.
- \_\_\_ 14. According to Delsham, one outstanding trait of the selfless person is the willingness to fight for a just cause a cause in which he or she stands to gain little and lose much.



- \_\_15. A list of students whose health records indicate that such noted information should be brought to the attention of the college instructors will be kept in the office of Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith.
- \_\_16. I gave him \$30 & he only gave me back \$5.
- \_\_17. He said he didn't see nobody around the store last night.
- \_\_18. I am desirous of meeting her, and when I do, I shall tell her how much we enjoy her music.
- \_\_19. I got so mad that I told her to bug off!
- \_\_20. It should not, I think, be too much of a strain on your resources (although I know that we are all under the burden of a tight budget) to furnish the required materials so that the project deadline can be met, thus forestalling other contractual penalties.
- \_\_21. Although Bill was the youngest member there. He didn't even offer to go to the store for her.
- \_\_22. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw an enormous effort directed toward adjusting, after Darwin's The Origin of the Species, to changed notions of humanity's relation to the rest of God's living creatures and hence to changed notions of the nature of humanity.
- \_\_23. The teacher had the tesses turned wrong-side-up on our desses when we came in the room.
- \_\_24. I should think it presumptuous of you to allow your predilection for bizzare clothing to alter the formality of this occasion.
- \_\_25. Mr. Juard was the nicest person I've ever met he would always have a big smile and warm hello for everyone in the building.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Carl Koch and James M. Brazil, Strategies for Teaching the Composing Process (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1978), pp. 14-16.

After discussion of the tabulation results, students came to the consensus that spelling, punctuation, and grammar problems become part of the image we have of someone and may interfere with the meaning the writer is trying to get across.

When the style/mechanics consensus was arrived at, the instructor again composed a guide sheet which organized the consensus. The style/mechanics guide sheet reads as follows:

Style/Mechanics Conference  
Directions for Audience Role-Play

- A. Writer: Have a draft ready for the style/mechanics conference, and present it to your reader(s).
- B. Reader: Identify with the writer. Before reading, visit a little, and then ask the writer to tell you about
  - 1. The audience the paper is meant for,
  - 2. The purpose of the paper,
  - 3. The kind of voice s/he was writing with.

Read 5a, b, c, d, e, and f below. Then read the paper twice if necessary. If you don't notice any problems with style and mechanics as in 5a, b, c, d, e, and f below, the completed project may be handed in. Otherwise,

- 4. Tell the writer what you especially liked about the paper.
- 5. Focus upon style and mechanics, role playing the audience, with penciled notes in the margin and talk:
  - a. If some rows of sentences seem to be jerky, point out where they could be combined.

- b. If some words could be left out to save you time, show where they occur.
- c. If a figure of speech or sentence livened up the paper, commend the writer.
- d. Point out to the writer any repeated problem with spelling that draws attention away from meaning.
- e. Point out to the writer any repeated problem with punctuation that draws attention away from meaning.
- f. Point out any repeated problems with passive voice, unnecessary adverbs, misplaced modifiers, etc., that draw attention away from meaning.

Note: If you notice a repeated problem, try to discover why the writer repeats it, and help him/her overcome it. Feel free to use the in-class library, or ask for advice.

Say your thanks for helping and sharing.

Through each of the exercises mentioned above, the basic consensus achieved in both groups was that many revisions are necessary to move prose outward from inner thought to public accessibility, that a major purpose of conferencing is to help us learn where, why, when, and how to move inner thought outward.

While evaluating student projects, if the instructor noticed a problem, and if that problem was not covered in earlier exercises, a new exercise problem representative of that shortcoming would be discussed in class to reach a consensus. That consensus was then added to the directions for priority conferencing.

For instance, one problem common to students in both

groups was the unconventional use of the comma. To overcome this problem, students in both groups were given a comma exercise, compiled from student projects. In this case, students in control groups were asked to work alone on the exercise, consulting the in-class library and/or their instructor for assistance. Students in the experimental classes worked on the exercise in peer groups, consulting the in-class library for assistance. Both groups were told they could also add or change words to make the meaning clear. When they were finished, both groups were given an instructional model with which to compare their results. The exercise follows:

#### Comma Worksheet

1. Just after two weeks of rest after football celebration the basketball season started.
2. When baseball finally did roll around the school and town were ready.
3. He made the move and he is stuck with the consequences good or bad because no one is going to come out on the mat and pull the opponent off him.
4. In the last couple of seconds if a wrestler misses a takedown that would have won it for him its his own fault.
5. A football player after a hard practice goes back for supper and eats all he can.
6. Because he was home often on the weekends he never really got away from me so he didn't miss me.
7. All last year I wrote him faithfully but I never got a reply.

8. So far I haven't received a letter from him but I know he is really busy and I do see him when I come home since he is going to a vo-tech and is living with mom and dad.
9. True a little good nature grumbling is to be expected but when the dishwasher became broken then things began to get out of hand.
10. Our education has advanced so we can base our arguments and actions on knowledge reason and common sense.
11. For some games there were more than 70 people attending or over half the town of \_\_\_\_\_ was there!
12. Two years ago while I was a junior in high school the actions by many students were childish and dangerous.
13. He insulted me with verbal abuse and I was tired of his two-faced phony actions and lies.
14. If they want more attention they should tell their parents.
15. At that time I was only fifteen years old and the only thing I cared about was getting her attention.

After the exercise, neither group had trouble reaching the consensus that the conventional use of commas helps to make meaning clear. This consensus was then added to the guide sheet on mechanics.

### Brainstorming Conferences

The brainstorming consensus was arrived at after several class-teacher interactions. In actuality, the brainstorming consensus preceded the consensus for content/focus, voice/audience, organization/coherence, and style/mechanics conferences discussed above, and was devised primarily to help students find engaging subjects and to help them overcome

blocks.

To help both groups learn the benefits of brainstorming with oneself (freewriting, listing, and issue trees), students were given a list of subjects devised by Stephen Judy and class time to freewrite, list and create issue trees centering around them. The list of Judy's subjects follows:

1. Friends
2. Enemies
3. People you admire
4. Special places
5. Fond memories
6. Not-so-fond memories
7. Worries
8. Strange-but-true stories
9. Sports
10. College life
11. Books
12. Television
13. Music
14. Film
15. What matters most.<sup>12</sup>

Following this, students were asked to pick a subject from Judy's list that clashed with their values or exceeded their expectations, then to write in their journals a question or problem they wanted to explore about that subject.

#### Moffett and Macrorie Writing Tasks

After the question/problem had been written down, students were asked to read the task assigned so that the

<sup>12</sup>Stephen Judy, "The Experiential Approach: Inner Worlds to Outer Worlds," in Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition, eds. Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980), p. 44.

follow-up exercises in freewriting, listing, and issue trees would likely engage students by leading toward the completion of one of their projects. The semester's major writing tasks follow:

### Writing Projects--Sharing Experiences

1. Write step-by-step directions to a particular audience for how to do some action such as play a game or operate a machine, or for how to make something. Say what the activity or product is supposed to be, and tell everything a person needs to know to do that, including which materials if any. Your directions will go to your audience to carry out and can become part of a how-to-do-it book.<sup>13</sup>
2. Tell briefly several different incidents that seem to you to have something in common, that are joined in your mind by some theme or idea. You may draw these incidents both from your personal knowledge and from your reading. State<sup>14</sup> the theme only as much as you think you need to.
3. Let two voices, A and B, discuss or argue some controversial issue. Set this down in dialogue form without stage directions. Make up this dialogue straight off for about thirty minutes. This will be used as a basis for further writing.

Rewrite your Dialogue by merging its two voices into one, but without sacrificing any good ideas. Feel free to add new ideas, get rid of weak ones, change words, and reorganize. You may regard this as a speech, editorial, or essay and follow up accordingly.<sup>15</sup> See if you can get the two sides to compromise.

<sup>13</sup>James Moffett, Active Voice (Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1981), p. 115.

<sup>14</sup>Moffett, p. 121.

<sup>15</sup>Moffett, pp. 65, 68.

4. Make a general statement about some aspect of people's behavior that from your own observations seems true to you. Use a number of examples to illustrate your generalization. Draw your examples from among the things you have observed and read about that led you to this generalization in the first place (800-1000 words).<sup>16</sup>
5. An I-Search project tells a story of a quest that counted for you. If you wish, you can divide your paper into five parts, like this:
  - a. What I Know (and didn't know about my topic when I started out).
  - b. Why I'm Writing This Paper. (Here's where a real need should show up: the writer demonstrates that the search may make a difference in his/her life.)
  - c. The Search (story of the hunt).
  - d. What I Learned (or didn't learn). (A search that failed can be as exciting and valuable as one that succeeded.)
  - e. Endnotes and Bibliography.<sup>17</sup>

Suggested subjects, though you may choose your own:

- a. A career
- b. A memory that has had a significant impact on you, one you are trying to understand
- c. A sport you would like to learn about
- d. Something you would like to own
- e. A handicap you want to learn about
- f. Your "roots"
- g. A place to vacation

Extra-Credit Project (Theory): With the permission of your instructor, the following Project may be written in place of Project 3 or 4 and for 5 extra-credit points.

Take a generalization such as your main statement in a previous paper and combine it with two or more generalizations of the same sort so as to develop a theory. The subject of the theory should be something that you know a lot about from personal observation and from your reading. Illustrate

<sup>16</sup>Moffett, p. 124.

<sup>17</sup>Ken Macrorie, Searching Writing (Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden, 1980), p. 64.



with examples and argue with proof. Your conclusion should be a further statement that is not evident in any of the original statements.<sup>18</sup>

Following their reading of each major writing task, both groups were asked to write freely about their problem/question (focusing on the task), and to write to themselves as the audience, without letting the conventions of spelling, punctuation, legibility, etc., get in their way. Students were asked to write for about fifteen minutes and then stop. They were informed that their freewritings could be revised later, outside of class.

To help students see how listing might enable them to plan and develop their writing tasks, and that lists, like freewriting, can be revised, both groups were given an illustration from Roger Garrison and asked which of the two students (A or B) was further along in planning. The listing exercise follows:

#### STUDENT A

General Subject: Sports

Title: Our Crummy Basketball Team

Fact List:

- \*Disorganized guys
- \*Don't care
- \*Break training all the time
- \*Cut every practice short
- \*Coach hasn't good control
- \*Lots of griping on team
- \*No school spirit
- \*Student fans throw beer cans and rubbish on court.
- \*Half-time show terrible. Cheerleaders don't work together.
- \*What's my athletic fee buying?

<sup>18</sup>Moffett, p. 130.

## STUDENT B

General Subject: Energy

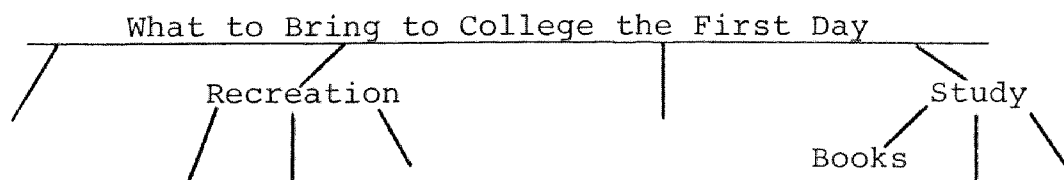
Title: A Family Beats Oil Prices

## Fact List:

- \*Ours is eight-room house
- \*In 1978, burned 1726 gallons oil at 49 cents.
- \*In 1979-80, 872 gallons at 98 cents.
- \*Difference: insulation, walls, roof cap, two wood stoves.
- \*Cost, insulation and stoves: \$1,500.
- \*"Payback" period (when these paid for) estimated two years.
- Estimated cost:
- \*Five cords hardwood (maple, oak, birch) from own woodlot per year
- \*1 cord (4' x 8') = 200 gallons oil
- \*Family sweats to cut wood. Calloused hands from splitting.<sup>19</sup>

Most students agreed that student B was further along. Both groups were then asked to create lists in their journals to help them with their problem/question. Students were asked to work on these for about ten or fifteen minutes and then stop.

Finally, students were shown the self-brainstorming method of creating issue trees. Students were shown part of an issue tree which was written on the blackboard, and through class-teacher interaction were asked to develop it more. The issue-tree exercise follows:



For each major writing task, both groups were encouraged to

<sup>19</sup>Garrison, How a Writer Works, p. 9.

freewrite, list, and/or create issue trees (whichever worked best) in their journals to help them resolve their problem/question. Students were asked to work on these, again, for ten to fifteen minutes before stopping.

After the freewriting, listing, and issue-tree practice, both groups were asked whether they found these methods helpful. The consensus was that they were helpful methods. When asked how, both groups generally agreed that these methods helped them "find what they wanted to say" and that the issue tree also helped them "find how to put it together."

To help both groups arrive at a consensus about planning their papers, students were given the following situation:

On your way to college, you purchased a stereo radio from a firm in a major city. One speaker has quit working. The radio is under warranty but only for one more month. You want to have a radio with both speakers working as soon as possible. You decide to send a letter to the firm.

What kinds of major decisions will you have to make to help you complete the letter?

There was a pause here for students to respond. When students needed help with any one of the major issues, the instructor offered the following:

- a. Would you want your radio replaced or fixed? Will it help to decide why you are writing? Your purpose?
- b. Would you write to the person you purchased it from, to the manager of the store, to the president of the radio company, to the complaint department? Will it help to decide who you are writing to? Your Audience?
- c. Finally, are you planning to threaten, to be objective, to humor your reader, or what? Will it help to decide how you plan to write this? Your voice?

By the end of the discussion, both groups concurred that these were major issues.

Both groups were then asked to consider the audience, purpose, and voice they wanted for their journal writings, relative to the above freewriting, listing, and issue tree exercises they had worked upon. They were asked to take about ten minutes to decide upon each of these, and to write their decisions in their journals.

Then both groups were asked to look again at their subject, their problem/question, and their journal writings, and to state their new understanding into a sentence. So students would better understand the abstractness of the directions, the following illustration was given them:

Subject: My Timidity

P/Q: Am I timid because my mother makes my decisions or does my mother make my decisions because I'm timid?

Statement (the new understanding): Perhaps I would become less timid if I could persuade my mother to let me make more of my own decisions.

Aim: Persuasion

Audience: Mother? Myself?

Voice: Objective? Humorous?

Again, about ten minutes were given to students to complete this. At the end of the exercise, students were asked whether or not they found it helpful. The consensus was positive. Students were also informed that freewriting, listing, issue trees, and other forms of invention can help them generate material whenever they become stuck with their

writing.

After the brainstorming exercises, a consensus guide sheet was written up by the instructor, and follows:

### Brainstorming Directions

- A. Writer: Prepare yourself for a brainstorming conference by freewriting, listing or creating issue trees about your subject. Come to the conference with the question or problem in writing that you wish to explore. It can be rough.
- B. Helpers: Take a few minutes to become further acquainted, and then ask questions like the following.
  - 1. What is your subject?
  - 2. How does it clash with your values or exceed your expectations?
  - 3. What is the question or problem you want to explore?

Then ask the writer questions that will help you and the writer explore the writing situation. Include questions about C, D, and E below. Don't struggle too hard over them, but ask the writer to write down a summary of what s/he plans to do after C, D, and E have been covered in talk. This way the plans will not be forgotten. They may be revised later.

### C. Planning for Audience

- 1. Does your audience consist of friends? Specialists? Is it unknown? Are you writing mainly to yourself?
- 2. What does your audience know about your subject?
- 3. What attitude does your audience have toward your subject?
- 4. What does your audience know about you?
- 5. What is its social, economic, political, and religious background? These responses can be rough guesses.
- 6. Will the audience see you as a peer, an authority, or what?

#### D. Planning for Aim

1. Do you want your readers to understand something?
2. Do you want your readers to make a judgment or to take action?
3. Do you want your readers to feel entertained, to get to know you, or are you planning to combine all these aims.

#### E. Planning for Voice

1. What is your attitude toward your subject? Compassionate? Objective? Angry? Comic?
2. What tone will you adapt toward your audience? One that is casual? General? Formal?
3. Are you representing your own point of view, that of a group, or that of an organization?
4. Need you establish your credentials?
5. Is this the best self (voice) you could have chosen?

Now help the writer arrive at a revised meaningful insight to be written in one sentence in the writer's journal. The sentence should contain the subject that is important and the new insight. You might begin by asking the writer what point s/he wants to make or by stating the point as you understand it, and then asking the writer if this is what was meant. Later in the semester you might ask questions as they arise during your discussion such as: How do you know? Such as? Why? So what? Etc.

Then help the writer work out a revised list and/or issue tree relating to the sentence. These will help the writer to focus, develop, and organize the content of the paper, perhaps also to revise the insight sentence again.

Conference is over. Exchange thanks for the sharing and helping.

Eighteen twenty-five minute periods were set aside for conferencing in each group over a period of forty-eight teaching days. Each conference was restricted to twelve minutes in each group. In the peer review group, each conference was limited to three students. Males and females

were encouraged to join each group, but students could switch with students from other groups if they wished. Stronger writers were encouraged to mix with weaker ones, but that was not insisted upon. The instructor set aside thirteen office hours per week for conferencing.

Conferencing was eased into the course in the following way. The plan was to reach a consensus for brainstorming and content/focus conferences and hold such conferences for Project I (Directions), to reach a voice/audience consensus and add this conference possibility to Project II (Thematic Collection of Incidents), to reach an organization/coherence consensus and add this conference possibility to Project III (Cooperative Aim), and, finally, to reach a style/mechanics consensus and add this conference possibility to Project IV (Generalization Supported by Instances) and Project V (I-Search).

As the plan turned out, two conferences (brainstorming and content/focus) were held for Project I, three for Project II, three for Project III, four for Project IV and six for Project V (one for each of the five sections of I-Search and one brainstorming conference). Brainstorming and content/focus conferences were often held more than once when three or more conferences were possible.

The types of conferences held for Projects III, IV, and V varied from group to group and student to student. In the experimental group, students agreed upon the type of

conference most needed by a particular writer. In the control group, the instructor and the writer agreed upon the conference.

Four class periods were designed for modeling Project I, for reaching a consensus for brainstorming and content/focus conferences, and for two half periods of conferencing. Four additional class periods were designed for modeling Project II, for reaching a consensus for voice/audience and organization/coherence, and for three half periods of conferencing. Five more class periods were designed for modeling Project III, for reaching a consensus for style/mechanics, and for three half periods of conferencing. Five additional class periods were designed for modeling Project IV and for four half periods of conferencing. Seventeen more class periods were designed for modeling Project V (I-Search) and for six half periods of conferencing.

Table 1 shows a skeletal structure of these components and their timing.



Table 1  
Timing of Various Course Components

Date	Consensus Exercises	Conferencing	Projects Due
AUG.			
26			Daly-Miller Test
28			Pretest
31			Pretest
SEPT.			
2	<u>Project I Modeled</u> , Free-writing, Listing, Issue Trees, Brainstorming Consensus		
4	Terry Essays, C/F Consensus	Brainstorming	
7	KKK Letter	C/F Conferences	
9	Gibson's Persona		
11	<u>Project II Modeled</u> , V/A Consensus, Judy's Subjects		Project I (12 hours) <sup>a</sup>
14	Pathological Writing, Coherence-Incoherence	Brainstorming	
16	Types of Structures, Org/ Coh. Consensus	C/F Conferences	
18	Sentence Maturity, Sentence Combining	V/A Conferences	
21	<u>Project III Modeled</u> , Comma Worksheet		Project II (14 hours)
23	Figures of Speech	Brainstorming	
25	Subjective Reaction Scale	C/F Conferences	
28	Style/Mechanics Consensus	Conferences	
30			
OCT.			
2	<u>Project IV Modeled</u>		Project III (14 hours)
5		Brainstorming	
7		C/F Conferences	
9		Conferences	
12	Midterm Exam <sup>b</sup>		
14		Conferences	
16	<u>Project V Modeled</u>		Project IV (16 hours)
21		Brainstorming	
23		Section I Conferences	
26		Section II Conferences	
28			
30			

Table 1 (continued)

Date	Consensus Exercises	Conferencing	Projects Due
NOV.			
2			
4			
<u>6</u>			
9			
11		Section III Conferences	
<u>13</u>		Section IV Conferences	
16		Section V Conferences	
18			
<u>20</u>			
23			
25	Thanksgiving Vacation		
<u>30</u>			
DEC.			
2			Project V (50 hours)
<u>4</u>			Posttest
7			Posttest
9			Daly-Miller Test
<u>11</u>			

<sup>a</sup>The time students' self-evaluations indicated they spent on the project.

<sup>b</sup>See Appendix A for exam questions and self-evaluation form.

The following journal entries briefly describe each class meeting of the semester. A few comments are reflective, giving the instructor's reactions to those meetings.

Journal for Composition 101--Fall, 1981

- 8-26      Gave Daly-Miller Test. Coded names (have to get sheets from 101) and talked about materials students need to bring to class on Friday. Orientation. Assigned "About Me" (2 hour essay--ungraded) for Friday.
  
- 8-28      Asked students to bring black pens to class on Monday. I plan to mark papers this semester with erasable blue ink. It seems more friendly than red. I said I'd return their drafts then and furnish paper. Recommended students purchase desk dictionaries. Lifted screen (prompt was under it) and students wrote. Also, collected "About Me" and assigned "Expectations of the Course" papers (2 hour essay--ungraded) for Monday
  
- 8-31      Briefly described Directions project and asked students to have a subject chosen for Wednesday, to play with a few in their journals. Passed out paper, 3x5 name-code cards. Then asked students to return cards after coding their papers. Then passed out drafts from last Friday. Went well. Students turned in drafts with the revisions. Asked students not to leave before the end of the period--to avoid disturbing writers.
  
- 9-2        Passed out listing handout, went over freewriting and issue trees. Asked students to play with these as they related to their subjects, to find which worked best or if all worked. Great way to come up with ideas, with content, and easier to revise than an entire draft. Class played with these a bit and general consensus was they were helpful. Mentioned to both groups we'd play Comfort Zone (Breaking-the-Ice) game next class and maybe do some brainstorming with peers (in experimental group), instructor (in control group). Passed back "About Me" with possible future writing subjects underlined.
  
- 9-4        Played Breaking Ice. Could ask other questions such as "Where is x from?" "What is x majoring in?" "Why x came to Waldorf?" "Hobbies," Etc.

Responded to questions about listing handout. Spoke about voice, audience, aim. Students accepted them as significant writing considerations. Didn't use exercises yet to make this point.

Asked experimental students to get in groups of 3 and brainstorm about each other's subjects. Went well.

In control group, I sense students getting restless when I brainstorm with a few students while they work on their own lists, etc., or the draft. I hope this works for a semester.

Terry consensus went very well but too rushed. Next year spend more time on Listing and move Terry to next class day.

- 9-7        Passed out the KKK letter and discussed the kind of persona found there. Focused on attitude and tone. Went well. So did content conferences in peer groups. I feel pressed for time, however, in control group already--especially when I look ahead.
- 9-9        Gibson's Persona--went well. Passed out Self-Evaluation sheet and discussed its purpose. Mid-term question assigned.
- 9-11\*     Self-Evaluations of Project I turned in with Project I. Project II modeled. Voice consensus reached. Decided to give students one class extension for getting projects in (no penalty). This helps me to complete office conferences for control group. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 10 hours.
- 9-14     Pathological writing, focusing also re-emphasized. Coherence-incoherence exercises. Brainstorming in both groups.
- 9-16     Midterm question discussed (a few problems understanding how to write to it in the journals). Types of organizational structures passed around and discussed. Organization consensus reached. Content conferences held.
- 9-18     In-class library browsed through. Terry essay (draft)--organization discussed. Sentence maturity, sentence combining, voice conferences. A little rushed today. Might not refer to Terry

draft at this time next year. Student-teacher conference hours - 13 hours.

- 9-21 Self-evaluations of Project II, Project III assigned and modeled, Comma worksheet, Project II turned in. Again offered extension. Asked students to have lists, issue trees, freewriting ready on 23rd for brainstorming of their subjects for project III, to write this in their journals.
- 9-23 Library orientation (drew locations of various areas on board). Figures of speech. Brainstorming conferences. Some students want to use other sources when they write projects. Asked students to imitate the figures and to share what they came up with. Fun!
- 9-25 Subjective Reaction Scale, content conferences, some brainstorming conferences. Payday! Don't like scale. May try something different next year. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 9 hours.
- 9-28 Style/Mechanics Consensus, Midterm directions and discussion, conferences (any type). Reminded students to bring drafts in their 3-ring notebook (journal) to class. Some forget. Explained cooperative aim again. Students have problems writing two voices into one.
- 9-30 Visited library with classes.

#### Reflections So Far

It is interesting to note that two control-group students have commented during conferences with me that they have asked other students outside of class to read their drafts. In the control classes, during in-class writing, a group of about seven students began visiting with their neighbors about their projects. Peer conferencing seems to be a natural form of conferencing for some students.

My tentative conclusion from this rather unscientific generalization is that both kinds of conferencing within a class may be preferable to either one alone. Some students also appear to shy away from peer conferencing.

In my s-t-i classes, at least six or seven students sign up for conferences on conferencing days (on the blackboard). Unfortunately, I can only get to 2 at a time, sometimes 3 (during brainstorming).

The basic problem I notice in the s-t-i classes so far is that some students want to talk rather than work on an exercise or their own projects while I am conferencing. That makes it difficult to concentrate, for me and for other students who want to work on their projects. I brought this to their attention and it helped.

Some peer group students seem to need some assurance that they aren't hurting their own scores by helping other students. Telling them that I don't use a curve seems to help, a curve in grading, that is.

Some students in peer group seem to shy away from selecting members of the opposite sex as partners for conferencing and want to be in groups of their own sex. This seems to be most common with weak writers.

Especially with Project III, students (several) in both groups did not have drafts ready on conference days. Maybe the project was more difficult, or maybe the fact there was both a football and a baseball game (both away) during this period may explain the problem.

10-2

Need to call Foster and let him know some control students are asking other students to respond to their projects. Sue, for instance, asks two sophomores to respond to hers, she told me.

Asked students to write self-evaluations on a separate sheet of paper attached to the last page of their projects, modeled and assigned Project IV. Gave students time to play with various subjects, and write lists, issue trees, freewrite for tomorrow's brainstorming. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 5 hours.

10-5

Called Foster and discussed members of Dis. Com. Committee will probably include Dave, Thom, Bruce, Autrey, and Walter or Milan (sp?). Dave suggested I mention these problems (control conferencing with peers) in my paper. Foster's office hours are M-W-F from 9-11.

Some students handed in Project III today. Asked them to (last class) to write their self-evaluations outside class and turn them in today with their projects. Did some sentence combining, and brainstorming conferences.

PI classes composed sentences (SC) individually, compared them with 2 other students, elected chairs

who reported conclusions to entire class. STI classes did SC individually, were called on at random to report results to class and were asked to turn in their work to me. I worked one-to-one with STI students with SC problems.

10-7 My seventh hour class (STI) wants to brainstorm with peers while I am holding conferences with students (about 1/3 of it). I've tried to discourage them by saying it would get too noisy for other 2/3 and for me, but I'd rather encourage more of it now that I am becoming convinced it is an effective method. So, I'll be hardnosed until next semester.

Responded to questions about Project IV. Content conferences were mainly held and a few brainstorming ones.

10-9 Homecoming is tomorrow. Consequently, the afternoon STI classes were not particularly open to class work. They wanted to get out early. I let them out 15 minutes early. A little PR can do marvels for class atmosphere.

Asked students to avoid some common problems I noted in their writing such as "being as" for "since," faulty reference as in "a person...they," use of "you" when third person might be more readerly, etc.

Also, discussed midterm directions. Held one conference in afternoon control classes. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 13 hours.

10-12 Midterm Essay

10-14 After reading the midterms, I find it enlightening to learn many students show their papers to other students in order to get help--in the dorms.

I wonder how often my comments differ from those of their peers.

Also, its been fun to see how well the strategies are working. I feel less stress and much more enjoyment in teaching--in spite of 13 hours per week of office conferences. But all these conferences are still getting to me. I don't look forward to the I-Search office conferences on Section III.

Returned midterms, discussed them and held conferences.

10-16

Read Craig's project since it is a paper that expresses "power" in writing better than any I have read for a couple of years. Gave directions for Project V and again emphasized Lauer's "state the elements in your subject that clash with or exceed your expectations." Illustrated this with Craig's project.

Asked students to write self-evaluations of Project IV and turn them in.

No classes Monday. Midterm break.

Also, asked students to find subjects, and brainstorm (list, tree, and freewrite) for Wednesday. Explained interviewing. Student-teacher conferences this week - 4 hours.

10-21

Students passed in Project IV (a few who had not done so last Friday). We again reviewed Project V, a sample student project from Macrorie's book. Held brainstorming conferences, discovered many students had not found subjects yet. This is about a 50-hour project. Asked students to have drafts in Section I ready for Friday.

10-23

Worked on documentation. Assigned Lester. Conferences on Section I. 10lg is still pressing (a few students) for peer interaction.

Noticed a nice list of positive and negative interaction skills in a film brochure from NW Univ. Film Library: "One-to-One: Communication Demonstrations." I copied the list down and may pass the list out in future peer conference classes:

#### Positive

1. Recognizing, accepting, and sharing feelings
2. Recognizing mixed messages
3. Questioning
4. Compromising
5. Sending straight, direct messages
6. Listening emphatically and accurately
7. Giving support
8. Admitting and apologizing for mistakes
9. Using humor appropriately



Negative

1. Labeling
2. Making assumptions
3. Discounting a point
4. Expanding the issue
5. Ignoring non verbal cues
6. Sending mixed messages
7. Avoiding the issue
8. Name-calling
9. Listening selectively
10. Employing power of status
11. Sarcasm
12. Interrupting
13. Yelling
14. Hiding feelings
15. Physical force

Returned projects. I don't believe I've given more A's in projects any time in the past 15 years. Asked students to have a Section II draft ready for Monday. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 10 hours.

- 10-26 Passed around a comma worksheet made up from sentences from Project IV. Discussed plagiarism. Section II conferences.
- 10-28 Examined another student model from Macrorie's I-Search book. Students haven't written one of these before and are a little skeptical.
- 10-30 Passed around a sheet so students could sign their names and subjects they have chosen. Then it was passed around again so students could look over the subjects and identify themselves as potential sources of information about the subject, as sources for interviews.

I suggested to Jim, who has allergies, that he write about allergies.

I prefer the atmosphere of the experimental classes. The control classes have a few disruptives.

Asked students to turn in Progress Reports including: Project Description, Work Completed, Work Schedule. Due Nov. 6. Worked on Note and Bib card form.

Passed around interviewing guidesheet. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 11 hours.

- 11-2      Mentioned students may visit Waldorf's career counselor for help if writing a career project. Let librarian know classes would be visiting library today. She agreed to help orient students who needed such help. I also helped students learn to use machines and find materials.
- 11-4      Called librarian to inform her classes would again be visiting library today to research their problem or question. Explained inter-library loan. Suggested students also check Forest City library. Reminded students of vertical file. Passed out career questions for interviewing.
- 11-6      Got a card for Brian (seriously hurt in a car accident), asked students who know him to sign it, and asked Martin (his close friend) to send it off.
- Took class to library after reminding students to introduce their sources when transposing note-cards to their drafts. Also reminded students to have a Section III draft ready for class on Wednesday next. Collected Progress Reports. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 16 hours (Too many!).
- 11-9      Asked students to summarize in 150-175 words a professional I-Search entitled "Coevolution of the Dodo." I hoped this would not only give them confidence in the I-Search approach but also help them understand how meaningful for them the project could become. Emig also recommends the use of summary.
- I liked the idea, but the article was too technical for many students. I probably won't do this again, use the Dodo article.
- Reminded students to bring Section III draft on Wednesday, section IV drafts on Friday and Section V drafts on Monday for conferencing.
- Now I'm becoming concerned about keeping up with office conferences for control students.
- Also commented on plagiarism since I noticed the problem in two I-Searches I'd seen during office conferencing last Friday.
- 11-11      Again reminded students to introduce their sources. Allowed more time for conferencing today over Section III.

Students chose to go to library again on Friday. We'll hold section IV conferences there. It may get a little noisy. Hope librarian will allow it.

11-13

Passed out samples of bib entries from various types of sources. Reminded students of Bib chapter in Lester, went to library. Tables there are large and students can spread materials out as they write. Students spoke in whispers during conferences. Librarian did not have to comment. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 15 hours.

11-16

Gordon turned in his final draft of the I-Search Project. After reading it, I asked him if I could post it. He consented. He did a nice job! Mentioned he wouldn't have to return to class during the next four class sessions.

Students conferred over Section V in peer classes and I with students in control classes.

11-18

Mentioned to students that up to midterm they wrote primarily from personal experience and found connections (meanings) there. After midterm, they were asked to use other people's connections and incorporate those connections with their own.

Most students, I've noticed (at least those I teach) seem to prefer writing to peer audiences though I've tried to encourage them to write to more and more distant audiences. Maybe peer conferencing encourages this.

After reviewing several students' notecards and finding they tended to use quotes rather than summaries or paraphrases, I asked them to check their notecards and summarize and/or paraphrase those they could.

Asked if it would help students if we simply went to library on Monday and worked on our I-Searches. Students were more than eager to do so.

Friday we will work on cumulative sentences and sentence combining. This is meant to remind students to try these in their I-Searches and to give them some more practice.

11-20

Worked with cumulative sentences in class. Peer group worked in groups and were asked to pick best example from each member. STI's worked

individually and I picked certain students to write their best one on board. Peer group also wrote their best ones on board.

Also asked them to try to combine FOS (figures of speech) and cumulative sentence exercise. Passed out exercise with beginning of several cumulative sentences and asked students to finish each one. Mentioned they could be added onto infinitely.

Next year ask students in peer groups to look at each other's I-Searches and combine sentences, etc. Student-teacher conference hours this week - 13 hours.

- 11-23 Went to library, which I also needed to do to catch up on conferencing with control group. Held about six conferences in each control class. Suggested some students might want to hold interviews during Thanksgiving.
- 11-25 Thanksgiving vacation. Student-teacher conferences this week - 9 hours.
- 11-30 Gave both groups time to work on their projects in class. I conferred with control group, one-to-one. Asked students to view their I-Searches from their reader's point of view when revising.
- 12-2 Asked students to write their self-evaluations on back of last sheet of their I-Searches. Announced where and when final exam would be given and reviewed the question with both groups. Asked students to work on exam question during next few days. Gave preliminary directions for in-class essay (posttest).
- 12-4 Foster called. Wanted to know where we were at. Mentioned I plan to revise first twelve pages by end of Christmas recess and get those pages down to him.
- Gave the in-class posttest (draft). First, though, passed back "Expectations" papers (see 8-28) and asked students to respond with "Expectations Met?"-- 2 hours. Student-teacher conferences this week - 6 hours. Done!
- 12-7 Passed back posttest drafts and passed out code cards. Asked students to change the fifth digit to a 2 as in 45921734198. Passed out paper, gave students time to copy name codes on it and asked

them to turn code cards back in to me. Asked students not to leave before end of period as that might create a disturbance for those still writing.

- 12-9 Passed out Daly-Miller Apprehension Test. Discussed semester with students. Experimental group seemed to be more positive and enthusiastic in their responses. Both groups valued time spent in library. (So did I for conferring with control group.) Control group thought it sometimes took too long to get a conference. It did.

Peer group enjoyed conferencing--the gals seemed to especially. It was hard to tell for the guys. I felt good.

Asked a few students to get their late projects in by Friday. Collected "Expectations Met?" papers.

- 12-11 Collected late projects. Returned I-Searches. Discussed them and also discussed final exam question. Also gave students time to work on it. Spent about 135 hours in Student-Teacher (control) conferences. Another 15 waiting.

- 12-14 Final Exam Day. Allowed students to brainstorm question for ten minutes if they wished (both groups). A few students chose to. Seemed to be effective.

#### Final Comments

I wonder if a comp course shouldn't be discovered rather than preconceived. If one has an awareness of the excellent strategies available in composition, strategies could evolve day by day and/or week by week, and thus be tailored for students where they were at--to fit them at the time.

I'd like to be able to time exercises for individual students to a greater extent (SC for example), but the number of students I am teaching is much too large for this. We desperately need a Writing Lab as part of the Learning Center.

Give the I-Search assignment very early in the semester (rather, emphasize it more early in the semester). That way students who may want to do an experiment will have more time to carry it out.

Also, emphasize more that I-Search should have a problem-solution arrangement, that the writer

should write as a learner, a discoverer, a creator, and not only as a reporter.

Maybe I should add a section to the I-Search entitled "How I Changed Through Writing This Paper."

I'm tired.

Replace Subjective Reaction Scale with Editing Questionnaire found on page 800 in Dec. 1981 issue of College English.

\*The underlined dates in the journal represent the days tabulations were made of hours spent conferencing control students that week.

### CHAPTER III

#### Measurement Design

##### Group Description

To enhance similarities between control and experimental groups, the instructor moved eight students from one section to another within the first week of classes. A few students who objected to such a transfer were not pressured into making it. The control group as a whole was thus made more similar to the experimental group as a whole. Also, larger classes (one control and one experimental) and smaller classes (one control and one experimental) were thus made more similar to each other.

The ninety-eight students selected for this study were from Track II of a three-track freshman program at Waldorf. These students had either English ACT scores ranging between 15 and 24 or composite high school GPA's of 2.00 or above. No student had an ACT in English above 24. A few had English ACT scores below 15 with composite high school GPA's of 2.00 or above.

Fifty students participated in the experimental group and forty-eight in the control group. The two experimental classes met in the morning on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, one class (101e) meeting from 10:30 to 11:20 and the other

(101f) from 11:30 to 12:20. The two control classes met in the afternoon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, one class (101g) meeting from 1:30 to 2:20 and the other (101h) from 2:30 to 3:20.

Classes were similar in terms of size, sex, and race. One experimental class (101e) and one control class (101g) each consisted of twenty-eight students (fourteen males and fourteen females). The other experimental class (101f) consisted of twenty-two students (eleven males and eleven females), and the other control class (101h) consisted of twenty students (ten males and ten females). All students but one were Caucasian.

Classes were also similar in terms of age, career interests, English GPA, high school GPA, English ACT, and composite ACT scores as is shown in Appendices B and C.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Students in both groups showed relatively realistic attitudes toward their writing skills. An unrealistic attitude is expressed in low writing skills and low WA or in high writing skills and high WA. James C. McCroskey defines low and high communication apprehensives (CA) as "people with scores one standard deviation above or below the mean score of the population." Using the standard deviation of the sample under study, no pretest students scored between 28 and 64 in apprehension and 8 and 12 in writing, or between 97 and 130 in apprehension and 2 and 3 in writing. Also, no posttest students scored between 28 and 70 in apprehension and 9 and 12 in writing or between 104 and 130 in apprehension and 2 and 3 in writing. See, James C. McCroskey, "The Communication Apprehension Perspective," in Avoiding Communication, eds. John A. Daly and James C. McCroskey (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), pp. 21, 30-33.



### Apprehension Testing Procedure

The apprehension test developed by John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller was given as a pre- and post-test to control and experimental classes. The pre-test was given to both groups in class on the second class day and the post-test on the second class day of the last week of the semester. Students were informed their responses to the test would be neither graded nor considered right or wrong. They were not informed the test would be given a second time near the end of the semester nor reminded later they had taken it before.

Students were asked to take as much time as they needed to complete the test, to be as honest as possible, and thanked for their cooperation. They were asked to circle whether they (1) strongly agreed, (2) agreed, (3) were uncertain, (4) disagreed, or (5) strongly disagreed with any of the twenty-six statements included in the test. (See Appendix D for a sample of the test and its directions.)

### Apprehension Scoring Procedures

Scores on the test can range from 26 (high apprehension) to 130 (low apprehension). The formula for computing scores is: "Writing Apprehension = 78 + Positive Scores - Negative Scores".<sup>2</sup>

In their development of the test, Daly and Miller

<sup>2</sup>Daly and Miller, p. 246.

found it had a test-retest reliability of .923 over a period of one week.<sup>3</sup> The mean score of their sampling of 164 students enrolled in basic composition and interpersonal communication classes at West Virginia University during the Spring of 1974 was 79.28 with a standard deviation of 18.86.<sup>4</sup>

### Essay Testing Procedures

The testing guideline underlying procedural decisions for the present study was set forth by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer: "The assignments [for the pre- and post-test] and the basis of evaluation should be similar to or the same as those used in instruction. . ."<sup>5</sup> Sara E. Sanders explains this concept succinctly. Her study closed with:

recommendations for restructuring the test essay and test situation by allowing students to choose their own topics [subjects] within a prescribed mode and/or aim, by providing time for prewriting activities and flexible time limits for the actual essay writing, by incorporating both pretest and posttest essays into the structure of the composition course, and by developing rating criteria specifically related to the course objectives.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Daly and Miller, p. 245.

<sup>4</sup>Daly and Miller, p. 246.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Braddock et al., Research in Written Composition (Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 45.

<sup>6</sup>Sara E. Sanders and John H. Littlefield, "Perhaps Test Essays Can Reflect Significant Improvement in Freshman Composition," Research in the Teaching of English, 9 (Fall 1975), 148.

Since, in the present study, control and experimental students were given time for prewriting (planning), drafting, reviewing, re-visioning, and editing each of their projects, and also, since Hogan recommends a "second chance" for students during essay testing, students were given that chance during pre- and post-testing for writing improvement.<sup>7</sup> On a Friday in early September, both groups were given a pre-test prompt, asked to write an in-class impromptu essay (a "prewriting impromptu" might be a more accurate label), and told they could revise it on the following Monday. (For the sake of clarity, the "second chance" will be labeled the "revised impromptu.") In late November, both groups followed the same procedure during post-testing. Students were asked to turn in their prewriting impromptu essays after Friday's class. These were returned to both groups on Monday. When finished writing, both groups turned in all drafts and the revised impromptu essays to their instructor.

Although it would have been possible for experimental students to confer during the essay testing, no conferencing was permitted for either group. First, it would have been impossible for the instructor to confer with fifty control students in two forty-five minute writing sessions, and, second, no conferencing was held during pre-testing because

<sup>7</sup>Craig Hogan, "Let's Not Scrap the Impromptu Test Essay Yet," Research in the Teaching of English, 11, No. 3 (Winter 1977), 225.

students had not yet been guided in conferencing strategies. Rather, it was assumed students would see their writing more objectively, more as readers would after a weekend of distancing themselves from their prewriting impromptu essays.

Other aspects of the pre- and post-testing, however, were much more congruent with classroom practice. Since control and experimental students chose their own subjects for each of their writing projects (six between pre- and post-test), both groups were asked to choose their own subjects for the pre- and post-test essays. Second, following Davis' lead, and because major projects were scored during the semester, pre- and post-tests were also scored.<sup>8</sup> Prior to testing, for example, both groups were told the first in-class essay (pre-test) score could be substituted for a lower midterm exam (essay) score, and the second in-class essay (post-test) score could be substituted for one-half a lower final exam (essay) score. (The final was worth two midterms.) Third, pre- and post-tests (as may be obvious) were incorporated into the structure of the course. Fourth, students were asked during the pre- and post-testing to write about issues from their experience that clashed with their expectations or exceeded them. Fifth, in all

<sup>8</sup>Ken Davis, "Significant Improvement in Freshman Composition as Measured by Impromptu Essays: A Large-Scale Experiment," Research in the Teaching of English, 13, No. 1 (Feb. 1979), 45-48.

six writing tasks between pre- and post-test, both groups were given an organizational pattern to follow in which they were asked to use specifics to make a point. This procedure was followed in the pre- and post-tests also.

The same organizational pattern was used for the pre- and post-test so the researcher could compare "apples with apples." The only difference between the two tasks is that students were asked to focus upon elementary or junior high experiences in the pre-test and upon senior high experiences in the post-test.

The pre- and post-test prompts follow:

Pretest:

Narrate any true happening or experience from your elementary or junior high years that illustrates a point you want to make of a general nature. In other words, you are telling a story not only for its own sake but also to show something that any adult reader could apply to people and events (s)he knows of. This can be in first (I) or third (she or he) person.  
(45 minutes)

Write a title for your composition.

Posttest:

Narrate any true happening or experience from your high school years that illustrates a point you want to make of a general nature. In other words, you are telling a story not only for its own sake but also to show something that any adult reader could apply to people and events (s)he knows of. This can be in first (I) or third (she or he) person. (45 minutes)

Write a title for your composition.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Moffett, p. 119.

Control and experimental classes wrote to the same pre-test and to the same post-test. Because the distance between the writing and the experience is greater in the pre-test than in the post-test, the "high school years" prompt was given as the post-test to both groups. Because both tests are the same in all other respects, no attempt was made to assign one control and one experimental group the "elementary or junior high" pre-test and the remaining control and experimental classes the "senior high" pre-test and reverse the procedure during post-testing.

Each of the 196 essays was identified by a name code. On the class day preceding the pre-testing, students were asked to follow the first ten directions on the code sheet below. Directions 11 and 12 were given the day of the pre-test and post-test. To distinguish pre- and post-test essays, students were asked to follow direction 2 for the pre-test and to write 2 in this position for the post-test.

- — — — 1. Prepare your name code completing the directions below. NAME:  
List the last four numbers of your home phone number.
- 2. Place the number 1 in the margin.
- 3. Period: Put the number of the period: 3, 4, 6, 7.
- 4. Sex: If you are male, put a 2; if you are female, put a 1.
- 5. List a number indicating how much you like to write: 1, I hate to write; 2, I do not like to write; 3, I like to write now and then; 4. I like to write very much.

- 6. Rank how well you think you will do with this theme. Rank on a scale of 1 (low) to 6 (high).
  - 7. Rank your paper the way you think your instructor will rank your paper, using the same scale as in number six above.
  - — 8. List the last two numbers of the year.
9. SUMMARY: Now list the twelve numbers shown in the margin, putting the bottom numbers in the last two spaces to the right:
- — — — —
- 10. Fill out the 3" X 5" card in ink. Put on it your name (last name first), period, sex, and your twelve-digit name code.
  - 11. Put your code (see 9 above) in the upper right-hand corner of your theme paper. This should be the same number as the one you put on your 3" X 5 " card.
  - 12. Write with a No. 2 pencil or a black pen and keep some margins on both sides. You may erase mistakes.<sup>10</sup>

The instructions for pre- and post-test essays follow:

Pretest: 90 minutes

1. Wednesday:

- a. Pass out 3 X 5 cards and "Coding" sheet for in-class theme. Ask students to fill them out while the instructor reads the directions aloud. Then collect.
- b. Ask students to bring notebooks, pens (dark black ink) or #2 pencils to class on Friday.

<sup>10</sup>Myers, pp. 21-23.

2. Friday:

- a. Write the prompt on the board and read it slowly to students.
- b. Ask students to use Friday's 45 minutes preparing (prewriting) for Monday's 45-minute in-class project.
- c. Inform students they may use the in-class dictionary.
- d. Inform students to bring black pens to Monday's class.
- e. Inform students not to pass along the topic during lunch since their own scores may be lowered.
- f. Collect and staple all the writing samples done on Friday.

3. Friday and Monday:

- a. Inform students that their score on this essay can be substituted for a lower mid-term exam score.
- b. Ask students to demonstrate all the writing skills they know.
- c. Erase the prompt at 12:30 and at 3:30.

4. Monday:

- a. Pass out ruled paper.
- b. Pass out 3 X 5 code cards and ask students to code their essays in the upper right-hand corner.
- c. Collect code cards.
- d. Return Friday's writing samples to students.
- e. Inform students that neatness counts:
  - (1) Write on only one side of the sheet.
  - (2) Mistakes may be erased.
  - (3) Leave margins.



- (4) Write with #2 pencil or with dark black ink.
- f. Inform students that they may use the in-class dictionary.
- g. Remind students to give titles to their essays.
- h. Inform students that they may ask questions not related to how to write the assignment.
- i. Collect all writings. Ask students to staple their essay.
- j. Do not inform students there will be a post-test until the class period on the Wednesday preceding it.

Posttest: 90 minutes

- 1. Follow the directions as above except for 3a.
- 2. Friday and Monday:
  - a. Inform students that their score on this essay can be substituted for one-half of a lower final-exam score.
  - b. Ask students not to write on the same subject as in their pretest.

### Essay Scoring Procedures

Three experienced college English instructors served as readers of the ninety-eight pre-test and ninety-eight post-test essays. Reading time of six hours was set aside each of two days for scoring. About two hours of the twelve were devoted to anchoring or selecting the prototypes for each of six scoring categories.

To facilitate scoring, the researcher preselected two anchors from the pre- and post-test essays for each scoring

category but did not inform the readers of the scores. The rubric or list of scoring categories evolved from discussion of the rationale behind each score.

However, to keep the scoring congruent with priority conferencing, readers were given copies of priority conferencing guidesheets to review during their silent reading and scoring of the first set of anchors and their consensus scoring of the final set of anchors. Readers were at the same time given copies of the prompt with the time frames removed, so readers would be less apt to speculate about whether the junior or senior high essays were pre- or post-test essays.

The readers concurred that the scoring categories be the same as the objectives of the conferencing guidesheets (Reader-Based content/focus, voice/audience, organization/coherence, style/mechanics) to keep the scoring congruent with class objectives. It should be noted, however, that the readers gave the same values to each priority area. In other words, they considered priority areas priorities for conferencing but not for scoring. The conferencing guidesheets thus became the rubric for scoring.

Readers also concurred that the directions of the prompt be included in the rubric, that "tell a story" be included under organization/coherence and that "illustrating a point" be included under content/focus.

Each reader's score of a pre- or post-test essay

ranged between 6 and 1 rather than between the 8 and 1 that Myers recommends.<sup>11</sup> The readers' reason for not following his recommendation was that the students of the study had ACT scores ranging between 15 and 24 or high school GPA's of 2.00 and above. Because this group represented the middle but not the ends of a standard curve, it was assumed that six categories would more realistically cover this range of student writing ability.

The readers chose a scale of 6 (high maturity) to 1 (low maturity) in each of the four priority areas as they related to the prompt. For example, if a student received a score of 6 for content/focus, 6 for voice, 4 for organization/coherence, and 4 for style/mechanics, the scores were totalled (20) and divided by 4 (the number of priority areas). The resulting score of 5 was then the score of the essay from the perspective of one reader. The readers concurred to leave to the reader's instincts whether to score a 2.5 a 2 or 3, a 3.5 a 3 or 4, a 4.5 a 4 or 5, etc.

After a consensus for the rubric, the anchors, and the scoring range was reached, essays (pre- and post-test) were shuffled together and randomly distributed to two readers. When more than one point separated the readers, a third reader was asked to score the essay. The closest two of the three scores were then added together for the total score with a possible range of 2 through 12, following Hogan's

<sup>11</sup>Myers, p. 31.

procedure.<sup>12</sup> Hogan used five scoring categories with a range of 2 through 10 to measure writing improvement. The readers were kept unaware of the score(s) the other(s) had given.

Perhaps the following guidesheet for the researcher entitled Selection of Anchors and Scoring of Essays will make this procedure more clear.

1. The researcher selects two potential anchors for each scoring category and a potential rubric for differentiating categories.
2. The researcher duplicates copies of potential anchors for the three readers.
3. The readers and the researcher decide on a date, a time and place to do the scoring.
4. On the day of scoring, the researcher asks the readers to read the prompt, a potential rubric (for the purpose of achieving congruence with classroom conferencing practice) and discuss it, then to read the first group of six potential anchors, and vote on scoring them (1=low, 6=high).
5. Those potential anchors for which there is quick agreement in score become actual anchors. The others are set aside.
6. The researcher passes out the second group of six potential anchors to the readers. Then the three again vote on them, this time discussing how category five differs from six, etc. If discussion results in a new rubric (the researcher takes notes of discussion), the new rubric is used for scoring. Splitters (three and four) are discussed last.
7. The researcher photocopies the consensus anchors, one for each reader, and places a set on a table for each reader.

<sup>12</sup>Hogan, p. 223.

8. The first reader places a ✓ in the upper left-hand corner of the front page before reading and his score in the center of the back of the last page.
9. The second reader looks for a ✓, and if one is in the upper left-hand corner, places his score beneath the name code in the upper right-hand corner of the first page.
10. The researcher makes sure scores are within one point, and if so, adds scores and places added score in a circle at top center of the first page.
11. If the two scores differ by more than one point, the second reader's score is covered, and the third reader reads the essay, changing one of the original scores.
12. The researcher serves coffee and cookies, asks readers to hold talk to a minimum, and reminds readers to score their first impressions and to refer to the anchors often.

After a consensus for the rubric, the anchors, and the scoring range was reached, the researcher composed (during the lunch hour) a scoring sheet to facilitate scoring for the readers. An example of such a sheet can be found in Appendix E.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

#### The Rubric

Readers were given the following version of the prompt for discussion:

Narrate any true happening or experience of your own that illustrates a point you want to make of a general nature. In other words, you are telling a story not only for its own sake but also to show something that an adult reader could apply to people and events (s)he knows of. This can be in first (I) or third (he or she) person. (45 minutes)<sup>1</sup>

Write a title for your composition.

After reading the prompt, readers discussed it with the researcher. The following represents the general consensus for scoring arrived at by the readers through discussion.

Students should be rewarded for their maturity in writing. The purpose of the prompt is to discover the degree to which students learn to connect incident and idea, as Moffett points out, to discover the degree to which students have decentered in their

<sup>1</sup>Moffett, p. 119.

attempts to "make narrative function in the service of a generalization. Essentially, this narrative should be just one long illustration of an idea."<sup>2</sup>

In a sense, the organization of the narrative is much like that of the fable and parable. Both are stories that make a point, implicitly or explicitly. However, the generalization should be more than a cliché, should relate clearly to the illustration, and follow from it.

If the writer appears to be writing more to him or herself rather than to an adult reader, and if the details are not controlled enough, so an adult reader may be misled (in other words, if irrelevant details mess up the clarity of the relationship between the illustration and the point), then the score of the essay must be lowered in relationship to the essays that are written to an adult reader, and are controlled in their details.

Students may, if they choose, state their point at the beginning and/or end of their illustration if they wish to play it safe, but the reader is left to decide whether repetition (in the case of a particular essay) helps or interferes with the message, or the reader's pleasure in discovering the point. Also,

<sup>2</sup>Moffett, p. 119.

the title should be checked to determine whether it makes clear what otherwise may not have been. Finally, the narrative should be examined as well to see if it points more to a less recognized truth than to an overworked cliché.

During discussion of the anchors, and occasionally, when problems arose during the scoring of essays, the researcher took notes on comments instructors provided for each scoring category. Later, the researcher analyzed the comments about each scoring category for features that defined each category. That analysis follows in Table 2.

Possible final scores were derived from the following approximate ranges:

- a. 22-24 = 6 points
- b. 18-21 = 5 points
- c. 14-17 = 4 points
- d. 10-13 = 3 points
- e. 6-9 = 2 points
- f. 4-5 = 1 point

The following analyses were derived from the readers' discussion of the anchor essays used in the present study. The scores for each essay represent the scores of the two readers. The anchor essays can be found in Appendix F.

#### "Pajama Party"

The writer of "Pajama Party" scores 6/5 (6 by one reader and 5 by the other) under Content/Focus. Her story about a daring way to bring about financial



Table 2  
Features of Scoring Categories

Categories	Scores	Features
Content/ Focus	6	The illustration of the essay will be complete, relating clearly to the point. Its point will tend toward a less recognized truth rather than toward a cliché.
	5	One of the above is not quite fulfilled.
	4	Two of the characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	3	Three characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	2	One characteristic for a 6 is clearly not fulfilled; two are not quite fulfilled.
	1	Two characteristics for a 6 are clearly not fulfilled; one is not quite fulfilled.
Voice/ Audience	6	The voice of the essay will appear honest, courageous, and appropriate for an adult reader.
	5	One of the above is not quite fulfilled.
	4	Two of the characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	3	Three characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	2	One characteristic for a 6 is clearly not fulfilled; two are not quite fulfilled.
	1	Two characteristics for a 6 are clearly not fulfilled; one is not quite fulfilled.

Table 2 (continued)

Categories	Scores	Features
Organization/ Coherence	6	The illustration will be developed in chronological order though flashbacks and other arrangements may be used for reader impact. Paragraphs follow from those preceding, as do sentences.
	5	One of the above is not quite fulfilled.
	4	Two of the characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	3	Three of the characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	2	One of the characteristics for a 6 is clearly not fulfilled; two are not quite fulfilled.
	1	Two characteristics for a 6 are clearly not fulfilled; one is not quite fulfilled.
Style/ Mechanics	6	Sentences will be appropriately varied. Diction is effective. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical conventions will be followed.
	5	One of the above is not quite fulfilled.
	4	Two of the characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	3	Three of the characteristics for a 6 are not quite fulfilled.
	2	One of the characteristics for a 6 is clearly not fulfilled; two are not quite fulfilled.
	1	Two characteristics for a 6 are clearly not fulfilled; one is not quite fulfilled.

support for the high school yearbook ends with the point that a risk may result in "cherished memories." However, while making her point, she becomes somewhat repetitious, apparently because she is still in the process of searching for her real meaning which appears to be that a risk may not only bring financial support to a yearbook project but may result in fond memories as well. Though her illustration is complete, her point may be somewhat out of focus.

The writer scores 6/6 under Voice/Audience. The voice appears honest, courageous, and appropriate.

Under Organization/Coherence, the writer scores 5/6. The middle section of the essay has few problems. The beginning and end suffer from some unnecessary repetition, particularly in sentences in the first and last paragraphs. The first sentence, perhaps, could be eliminated.

Under Style/Mechanics, the writer scores 6/6. She has a few problems with the semi-colon, with switching, unnecessarily, into passive voice, and with her pronoun referents, but nothing serious.

#### "Acceptance"

The writer of "Acceptance" scores 5/5 under Content/Focus. Readers were unclear about her meaning in the second paragraph: "I wanted people to like me for myself not for what I did or didn't do." She

appears dissatisfied when people like her for doing things: offering help or advice, and going to a rock concert with a good-looking, friendly boyfriend. But isn't she "doing things" when she chooses not to smoke or drink, but to like her teachers and to get good grades? Perhaps her point is that she wants to be accepted for doing her things and not only for doing the things others want her to do.

The writer also scores 5/5 under Voice/Audience. Her voice appears to enter the realm of self-pity. One wonders why she let herself be chosen by these friends rather than others. Were other friends not available? What were her standards for choosing friends? Were they any different than those of the clique that apparently chose her? In this matter, she seems passive without recognizing this about herself. All in all, she is trying to be honest with herself and courageous in sharing this honesty, but more honesty could lead toward a more significant insight.

Under Organization/Coherence, the writer scores 6/6. The illustration of the essay is in chronological order and paragraphs seem to follow from those preceding, as do sentences.

Under Style/Mechanics, the writer scores 5/5. Spelling and punctuation (especially the comma) are areas she could focus more upon.

### "Jealousy"

The author of "Jealousy" scores 4/4 under Content/Focus. The title "envy" may be preferable to some readers, though this point is relatively minor. In the second place, several questions remain unanswered: What was Todd's time in the two-mile relay? What was the writer's time before the feelings of envy, during, and after? How did the coach praise Todd? What did the coach say about the writer's time? To what extent was the writer "hurting the whole track team"? Most importantly, however, what happened that made the writer own up to himself about his envy? Could more be said here? These kinds of added details would create a more vivid picture for the reader, and, perhaps more impact. The point may also need more development. Perhaps by praising the writer more, the coach may not have helped create this situation.

Under Voice/Audience, the writer scores 5/4. The voice appears honest and appropriate for an adult reader, but fails to some degree to risk the details called for above, and the point may be overly self-effacing.

The writer scores 5/5 under Organization/Coherence. The illustration is organized chronologically, and the point follows from it. However, the transitions might be more explicit. Rather than "one

day" and "after awhile" as well as several other "awhiles," the writer might have been more precise about the passage of time.

Under Style/Mechanics, the writer scores 3/3. Besides several misspellings and comma problems, diction is occasionally a problem. The conjunction "and" is most generally the connecting link between thoughts.

#### Untitled

The writer of the untitled essay scores 3/3 under Content/Focus. The illustration lacks development. Consequently, its relationship to the point (which is a cliché) is somewhat unclear. The added sentence at the end of the essay suggests the writer may have been aware of her brevity, as does "To make a long story short" in the fourth paragraph.

Under Voice/Audience, the writer scores 3/3. The risk-taking appears more in her negative assessment of Tammy than in her positive assessment, as though adult readers know what constitutes a friend, but may need help understanding what constitutes a "brat." Her voice may also be somewhat inappropriate for an adult audience, sounding more appropriate for junior high students.

The writer scores 2/2 under Organization/Coherence. In paragraph one, the writer states that

"for quite a while we didn't even look at each other." In paragraph three, the writer states, "Well a few weeks later...." The chronology of the essay is confusing. How long is "for quite a while"? In the second paragraph, what incidents occur first, what second, and what third? The writer fails to tell. We have here a list of incidents with an ambiguous chronology.

Under Style/Mechanics, the writer scores 3/2. Sentences are appropriately varied in length, but diction is immature as is mechanics.

#### "Leadership"

The writer of "Leadership" scores 1/2 under Content/Focus. The illustration is clearly more Writer- than Reader-Based, though the point appears to relate somewhat to it. However, the point is very much like the cliché that "we learn from experience."

Under Voice/Audience, the writer scores 3/3. The writer appears to be writing to an adult audience, at least an internal adult. Though the voice sounds a little like bull, at least it tends toward the right kind of bull.

The writer scores 2/1 under Organization/Coherence. The illustration is quite generalized. It consists of statements about what he learned from his junior high experience rather than of what happened.

Coherence in and between sentences is extremely difficult to spot. Roughly, the essay proceeds from past to present to future.

Under Style/Mechanics, the writer scores 1/2. Perhaps the writer's attempt to create lengthy sentences interfered with coherence. Generally, the sentences illustrate problems with punctuation, grammar, and diction, but surprisingly few with spelling.

#### "Try-Outs"

The writer scores 1/1 under Content/Focus. The writer leaves too many questions unanswered. One wonders whether the writer "made cheerleaders," why the writer lost respect for Starla because she ran around with popular students, and what is meant by the last sentence. It is neither clear how the point relates to the illustration, nor clear what the point means.

The writer scores 1/1 under Voice/Audience. The voice sounds somewhat envious, dishonest, and pompous, like a case of sour grapes. It is difficult to believe that Starla "had forgotten all the cheers and jumps," perhaps because the credibility of Starla's judges is not called into question here, nor is enough said about Starla's popular friends to cause the reader to question or doubt them. One also wonders about the apparent contradiction between paragraph one and paragraph three concerning Starla's popularity.



Under Organization/Coherence, the writer scores 1/2. The essay is organized chronologically, but either the first or third paragraph could be viewed as the illustration supporting the point. If the third paragraph is the illustration, then it is somewhat more clear that the point (the last sentence?) could relate to it, but still not clear enough.

Under Style/Mechanics, the writer scores 2/1. Many of the sentences could be combined, and diction could be improved. A few problems with conventions can also be noticed.

### Results

When scoring was completed, Mike Szymczuk of Heartland Education Agency in Ankeny, Iowa, agreed to tabulate the results using the Repeated Measure Analysis.<sup>3</sup> The Repeated Measure Analysis was chosen because it measures several factors with repeated measures on the same elements. Table 3 shows the results for writing apprehension (WA) scores.

Therefore, it is concluded that for Between subjects

- (1) the type of group does not significantly affect WA;
- (2) sex had no significant effect on WA; and (3) the effect

<sup>3</sup>B. J. Winer, Statistical Principles in Experimental Design, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), pp. 514-99.

of sex is not dependent upon group. For Within subjects (1) WA decreased significantly ( $p < .01$ ); (2) group had no significant function across repeated measures; (3) sex was a significant function ( $p < .01$ ) across repeated measures; and (4) the repeated measure by group by sex was nonsignificant.

Table 3  
Repeated Measure Analysis of Writing Apprehension

Source	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects				
Group (G)	1	1262.26	1.40	n.s.
Sex (S)	1	3.27	0.01	n.s.
G x S	1	237.88	0.26	n.s.
Error	93	903.26	--	--
Within Subjects				
Repeated Measure (R)	1	2190.86	42.22	<.01
R x G	1	43.26	0.83	n.s.
R x S	1	520.96	10.04	<.01
R x G x S	1	67.56	1.30	n.s.
Error	93	51.87	--	--
Total	193			

Note: See Appendix G for tables of each subject's apprehension and writing scores.

Table 4 is for the apprehension scores. It reflects the means, standard deviations and frequency counts for the treatment groups, sex, and repeated measures across the pre-test and post-test. It addresses the between and within sources of variation for Group (G), Sex (S), Repeated Measures (R),  $R \times G$ , and  $R \times S$ .

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Counts for  
Treatment Group, Sex, and Repeated Measure on  
Apprehension Scores

Variable	n	Pre-test	Post-test
Treatment			
Peer	49	82.78 (14.69) <sup>a</sup>	88.51 (15.40)
Teacher	48	78.19 (15.37)	85.85 (17.71)
Sex			
Male	48	78.92 (16.68)	88.92 (16.61)
Female	49	82.06 (13.42)	85.51 (16.50)
Repeated Measure	97	80.51 (15.13)	87.20 (16.55)

<sup>a</sup>Numbers in parentheses reflect the standard deviation.

Note: Range of apprehension scores is 26 through 130. The higher the score, the lower the writing apprehension (WA).

While both male and female students scored higher on the post-test, males had a greater increase in score than

females: 10 points vs. 3.5 points. Therefore, sex was a significant function ( $p < .01$ ) across repeated measures. Females scored three points higher on the pre-test than males; males 3.5 points higher on the post-test than females.

The repeated measure shows a seven-point increase in score (a decrease in writing apprehension (WA)) for the entire sample, significant at  $p < .01$ .

Table 5 shows the results for writing scores.

Table 5  
Repeated Measure Analysis of Writing Scores

Source	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects				
Group (G)	1	0.14	0.01	n.s.
Sex (S)	1	140.61	14.27	<.01
G x S	1	10.51	1.07	n.s.
Error	93	9.86	--	--
Within Subjects				
Repeated Measure (R)	1	26.91	4.33	<.05
R x G	1	0.70	0.11	n.s.
R x S	1	6.64	1.07	n.s.
R x G x S	1	2.91	0.47	n.s.
Error	93	6.22	--	--
Total	193			

Therefore, it is concluded that for Between subjects (1) the type of group does not significantly affect writing scores; (2) sex had a significant effect ( $p < .01$ ) on score increases; and (3) sex by group had no effect. For Within subjects (1) scores increased significantly ( $p < .05$ ); (2) group had no significant function across repeated measures; (3) sex had no significant function across repeated measures; and (4) the repeated measure by group by sex was nonsignificant.

Tables 6 and 7 refer to the writing scores. Table 6 reflects the means, standard deviations and frequency counts for the treatment groups, sex, and repeated measures across the pre-test, post-test, and average or combined measures. It addresses the between and within sources of variation for Group (G), Sex (S), Repeated Measures (R),  $R \times G$ , and  $R \times S$ . Table 7 focuses on the interaction between G and S across measures and as an average or combination.

Under treatment, Table 6 shows no significant differences between the average writing scores of peer review (PR) and teacher review (TR) groups. The average PR score is .06 higher than the average TR score. However, the PR group began the semester with slightly lower scores than the TR group and ended the semester with slightly higher scores than the TR group. The PR group shows .87 gain and the TR group .63 gain.

Under sex, the table shows females have significantly

higher average scores ( $p < .01$ ) than males: 1.22 higher. Females gained more than males between tests: 1.12 vs. .37. They also scored .83 higher than males on the pre-test and almost doubled their lead (1.58) on the post-test.

Under repeated measures, the table shows the entire sample increases significantly in average score (.75), significant at  $p < .05$ .

Table 7 will show the interaction of group and sex more clearly.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Counts for  
Treatment Group, Sex, and Repeated Measure on  
Writing Scores

Variable	n	Pre-test	Post-test	Combined
Treatment				
Peer	49	5.51 (1.82) <sup>a</sup>	6.39 (2.33)	5.95 (2.07)
Teacher	48	5.58 (1.71)	6.21 (2.03)	5.89 (1.87)
Sex				
Male	48	5.13 (1.41)	5.50 (1.71)	5.31 (1.56)
Female	49	5.96 (1.97)	7.08 (2.31)	6.53 (2.14)
Repeated Measure	97	5.55 (1.76)	6.30 (2.18)	

<sup>a</sup>Numbers in parentheses reflect the standard deviations.

Note: Possible range of writing scores is 2 through 12.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Counts for  
the Interaction of Treatment Groups by Sex Across  
Repeated Measures on Writing Scores

Sex	Peer Review	Teacher Review
<u>Pre-test Treatment</u>		
Male	5.04 (1.52) <sup>a</sup> (24) <sup>b</sup>	5.21 (1.32) (24)
Female	5.96 (1.99) (25)	5.96 (1.99) (24)
<u>Post-test Treatment</u>		
Male	5.29 (1.94) (24)	5.71 (1.46) (24)
Female	7.44 (2.20) (25)	6.71 (2.40) (24)
<u>Combined Treatment</u>		
Male	5.17 (1.73) (24)	5.46 (1.39) (24)
Female	6.70 (2.09) (25)	6.33 (2.19) (24)

<sup>a</sup>Numbers in parentheses are the standard deviation.

<sup>b</sup>Numbers in parentheses are the frequency counts.

The pre-test writing scores in Table 7 show that:

1. PR males had the lowest score at the beginning of the semester: 5.04.
2. TR males score slightly higher than PR males: 5.21.
3. Females score uniquely the same (5.96), but higher than males.

The post-test scores in Table 7 show that:

1. PR males have the lowest score: 5.29.
2. TR males have the second lowest score: 5.71.
3. TR females have the second highest score: 6.71.
4. PR females have the highest score: 7.44.

A comparison of pre- and post-test scores shows females improved most.

1. PR males show the lowest increase in score: .25.
2. TR males the second lowest: .50.
3. TR females the second highest: .75.
4. PR females show the largest score increase: 1.48.

The combined scores show females have higher overall scores than males.

1. PR males have the lowest overall score: 5.17.
2. TR males have the second lowest overall score:  
5.46.
3. TR females have the second highest overall score:  
6.33.
4. PR females have the highest overall score: 6.70.



## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

#### Conclusions

Hypothesis I proposed that "Control and experimental groups will show no significant differences in WA scores." The between subjects analysis by group and the within subjects, repeated measure by group (see Tables 3 and 4), show no significant differences. The type of group does not significantly affect WA. Also, group had no significant function across repeated measures. Therefore, hypothesis I is tenable.

Hypothesis IA proposed that "Control and experimental groups will show significant decrease in WA." The repeated measure within subjects (see Table 3) revealed significant improvement ( $p < .01$ ) between the overall scores. Table 4 reveals that improvement was 6.69 points. Therefore, hypothesis IA is true.

Hypothesis IB proposed that "Female students will show significantly less overall WA than males." The repeated measure within subjects by sex (Table 3) shows significant sex differences ( $p < .01$ ). Males had an overall decrease of ten points; females of 3.5 points as is shown in Table 4. Table 4 also shows females had 3.14 points less WA than

males at the beginning of the semester and 3.41 points more at the end. However, the between subjects measure by sex (Table 3) shows sex had no significant effect on overall WA. Males' WA decreased more than females', but overall WA was the same for both sexes. Therefore, hypothesis IB is false.

Hypothesis II proposed that "Control and experimental groups will show no significant differences in writing scores." The between subjects analysis by group and the within subjects, repeated measure by group (see Table 5) show no significant differences. The type of group does not significantly affect writing scores. Also, group had no significant function across repeated measures. Therefore, hypothesis II is tenable.

Hypothesis IIA proposed that "Control and experimental groups will show significant improvement in writing." The repeated measure within subjects (see Table 5) revealed significant improvement ( $p < .05$ ) between overall scores. Table 6 shows that improvement was .75 points. Therefore, hypothesis IIA is true.

Hypothesis IIB proposed that "Female students will show significantly higher overall writing scores than males." The repeated measure within subjects by sex (Table 5) shows no significant differences. As Table 6 points out, males had an overall increase of .37; females of 1.12. However, the between subjects measure by sex

(Table 5) shows sex had a significant effect ( $p < .01$ ) on score increases. Females on the average (Table 6) have a higher writing score (1.22) than males. Females scored .83 higher than males at the beginning of the semester and 1.58 higher than males at the end. Therefore, hypothesis IIB is true.

Hypothesis III proposed that "Peer conferences will be more efficient than one-to-one conferences for the instructor who uses the longer writing tasks." Of the forty-four class hours of the semester, eighteen half periods of twenty-five minutes each were reserved for consensus conferencing in each of the four classes. Each conference was restricted to twelve minutes in both groups. Thus, the instructor was able to hold thirty-six class conferences in each of two control classes, a total of seventy-two class conferences. That left an additional 792 conferences to be held in the instructor's office:  $48 \text{ students} \times 18 \text{ conferences} = 864$ ;  $864 - 72 = 792$ . At twelve minutes per conference, that meant 9,504 minutes or 158 hours would need to be found.<sup>1</sup>

The period between and including the first and last day of consensus conferencing consisted of forty-eight teaching days. Somehow, then, the instructor needed to set aside about three hours per day ( $158 \div 48$ ) or fifteen hours

<sup>1</sup>Waldorf College presently has a Learning Center with a Writing Laboratory.

per week for office conferences. Estimating that some students would not be ready for conferences when they were offered, the instructor settled on thirteen hours per week for control conferencing.<sup>2</sup>

During this same period of forty-eight teaching days, experimental conferencing was handled almost totally by students. Each of eleven students requested one office conference and was not refused. Several experimental students asked for the instructor's help during peer conferencing. However, rather than intervene, the instructor followed the advice of Thom Hawkins "to let small groups of students talk among themselves on specified topics with only minimal intervention and participation-as-an-equal from the teacher."<sup>3</sup> Such students were asked what troubled them about their projects, whether they had made their feelings known to the conference group, how the group responded, whether or not they were satisfied with the response, and, if not, if they had made that feeling known to the group. This series of questions almost always returned the writer to the conference group for additional help.

<sup>2</sup>Waldorf College recommends an instructor set aside five to seven office hours per week for meeting with students.

<sup>3</sup>Thom Hawkins, Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976), p. 9.

Experimental conferencing groups were restricted to three students so each student in each group could read two students' drafts and respond to each in the twenty-five minutes set aside for conferencing. Thus approximately 1,800 peer conferences were possible in the experimental group: fifty students x eighteen conferences x two readings = 1,800. Of course, the number of actual conferences was less because some students were not ready or were absent. But, the point should be very clear that experimental conferencing was more efficient for the instructor than control conferencing. Notice, too, that experimental conferencing enabled writers to hear from two readers rather than from one as in the control approach.

Table 8 gives estimates of the hours and numbers of control and experimental conferences.

Table 8  
Estimates of Hours and Numbers of Control and  
Experimental Conferences

Conferences	Hours	Numbers
Control	150 <sup>a</sup>	675
Experimental	15	1,500

<sup>a</sup>The number of hours was less (135, as pointed out in the December 9th journal entry in Chapter II). However, since office hours were kept whether control students showed for conferences or not, 150 is closer to the time actually spent.

### Discussion and Recommendations

For the overburdened instructor, peer conferencing appears to be an effective way out from under the stack of student essays. Peer conferencing is far more efficient than one-to-one for the instructor assigning longer student projects and appears as effective as one-to-one in decreasing WA and fostering writing improvement.

However, a combination of the two approaches may likely be an even more effective and somewhat efficient approach. An instructor, for example, could discover early in the semester who the best writers were in a given class, hold one-to-one office conferences with them and place those students in separate peer conferencing groups with less proficient writers. If 100 students comprised the instructor's teaching load, and if five conference helpers could be found in each class, the instructor's office-hour load for one-to-one conferencing with conference helpers would probably amount to between seven and eight hours a week: twenty helpers x eighteen conferences x twelve minutes per conference over forty-eight days = 1.5 hours per day of office conferences.

If the instructor and five helpers lead conferences in classes of twenty-five students, six conferencing groups could be formed in each class. If each helper's group consisted of four individuals (including the helper), about thirty-six minutes would need to be set aside in each class

for three individual conferences of twelve minutes. Fifteen less proficient writers would thus be reached by five helpers in each class, and the five helpers would also benefit by having their projects responded to by peers. The remaining five students could hold conferences with their instructor.

This combination of the two approaches resembles the approach presently used by this instructor, largely because of two problems raised by the present study. First, because males improved in their writing less than females, the instructor wondered whether males (including the instructor) and/or females were more outspoken about the readability of female's drafts than of male's during conferencing. Secondly, it seemed questionable somehow that the top PR writers not be encouraged to ask for help from their instructor during conferencing (in spite of Hawkins' helpful assurance), for then they were largely limited to help from their less capable peers. These problems need to be researched.

However, the fact that PR females generally improved in writing more than TR females and all males, supported peer conferencing. Studies of this issue, however, are also needed in composition.

Writing apprehension appeared to be affected about the same by both approaches. However, two rather distinct effects may occur in the combined approach. First, because more may be expected of males in this approach,

males may show less decrease in apprehension. Secondly, because several students in the control group requested peer conferencing help so they would not have to wait as long for a conference from their instructor, this could be reflected in greater apprehension decreases for such students in the combined approach.

The following three recommendations relate to future studies of this type. First, when matching students, WA pre-test scores probably should not be overlooked. Note, for instance, that the WA pre-test scores of the experimental group (see Table 4) were 4.59 points higher than those of the control. In the present study, this difference did not appear to have a significant effect. Greater differences in score between groups may result in less valid and/or reliable results.

Second, Abraham H. Maslow's theory of defense and growth appears to have interesting ramifications for studies such as this. Maslow contends that when dangers are enhanced and attractions minimized, the learner may regress; but when attractions are enhanced and dangers minimized, the learner may grow.<sup>4</sup> If this is true, researchers trying to find correlations between decreases in WA and increases in writing skill may find a difficulty regarding McCroskey's observation that the immature often have unrealistic attitudes

<sup>4</sup>Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), p. 45.



about their communication abilities.<sup>5</sup> Correlation studies using student self-assessments of writing apprehension may not reveal much unless they distinguish between types of students: low apprehensives with weak skill, high apprehensives with strong skills, moderate apprehensives with moderate skills, etc.

Finally, several of the questions raised above, and others, call for coordinated studies in composition. They suggest also that a method of studying peer conferencing is needed in composition research, a method, perhaps, of protocol analysis similar to that developed by Flower and Hayes. Flower and Hayes define a "thinking aloud protocol" as "a detailed record of what is going on in the writer's mind during the act of composing itself."<sup>6</sup> If similar protocols (perhaps transcribed from audio-visuals of conference groups) recorded what was going on during the act of peer conferencing, and were compared with "thinking aloud protocols" of the same students, researchers may be enabled to learn what types of conferencing strategies are most effective in helping writers develop their internal sense of audience.

A third researcher, using pre- and post-test essays and tests of WA could assist the team by selecting types of groups for study, and measuring them for improvements in

<sup>5</sup>McCroskey, pp. 30-33.

<sup>6</sup>Flower and Hayes, p. 368.

writing and decreases in WA. The fourth member of the team, the instructor, could also assist by suggesting conference strategies for testing and/or by serving as a collector and assessor.

Likely, coordinated research efforts of this type would help answer questions raised by this study and many more.

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APPENDIX A

SELF-EVALUATION, MID-TERM, AND FINAL EXAM

### In-Class Self Evaluation

Directions: Respond either on the back side of the last sheet of your project or on a separate sheet attached to the last page.

1. What is the total of the time you spent on your journal entries, drafts, revisions, and the final project?
2. Did you do anything in this paper you haven't tried before? Consider content/focus, voice/audience, organization/coherence, style/mechanics, or any other aspect of your paper.
3. Place a penciled squiggly line in the left margin of any paragraph you are particularly proud of and under two or three words, phrases, and sentences you feel are particularly effective.
4. Place a penciled bracket around any punctuation, spelling, or expression you feel uncertain about. If a sentence or paragraph gave you difficulty, also place it in brackets.
5. What one thing will you do to improve your next piece of writing?
6. Did you learn anything about yourself as you wrote your paper?
7. Did you feel a sense of satisfaction upon completion of your paper?
8. Did your paper achieve your original purpose?



9. (Optional) If your classmates had to agree on a single grade for your paper, what grade do you think they would give it?
10. Who is the audience for your project?\*

\* Adapted from Mary H. Beaven

Mid-Term Essay:

Preparation: Keep a record of your writing processes for each of your projects, especially of where you ran into problems and of how you solved them. You may use your journal record when writing the mid-term essay. The following questions about the recursive stages of the writing process may help you:

1. Did you have problems finding an engaging problem to explore and solve (brainstorming)? Describe and elaborate.
2. Did you have problems listing, freewriting, treeing, researching (finding content)? Describe and elaborate.
3. Did you have problems deciding on focus, a voice, or an audience? Describe and elaborate.
4. Did you have problems organizing your paper or making the sentences or paragraphs cohere? (reviewing and re-visioning)?
5. Did you have problems with mechanics or style (editing)?

Question: Describe your writing processes for Projects I, II and III, pointing out areas particularly troublesome to you. Show examples of problems in your drafts, and explain how you solved those problems.

### Preparing for the Final Exam:

During the last class day, you will be given all of your writing projects to examine over the weekend. The purpose of your examination is to give you a chance to discover the degree to which your writing matured or regressed this semester. Examine your writing in three areas: social (Reader-Based prose), intellectual, (the relationship between your evidence and your generalizations), and the writing apprehension.

First, as you evaluate your projects for development from Writer-based to Reader-Based prose, consider the following areas:

- |                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Content        | 3. Organization/Coherence |
| 2. Voice/Audience | 4. Style/Mechanics        |

Ask yourself whether or not your writing has become more Reader-Based in each of these areas. Write your responses (including examples) upon notecards.

Second, with each of your projects, ask yourself whether or not the relationship between your evidence and your thesis (point, generalization) has become more powerful or focused as the semester progressed. Write your responses (including examples) on notecards.

Third, ask yourself whether or not your writing shows you grew more comfortable with writing as the semester drew to an end. Again, write your responses (including examples) upon notecards.

As you write to these three points, reflect upon these two areas also:

1. Did my progress in one area create regression in others?
2. If I did not put enough time into reviewing and revising a project, should I expect much progress from writing it?

Place your responses (including examples) on notecards.

Finally, study the guidesheets, exercises, your class notes, comments you wrote in your journal, etc. Look for evidence to explain the degree to which conferences, guidesheets, discussions, exercises, etc. helped or interfered with your writing development. Write notecards over what you learn.

Bring your notecards, a pen, your projects, and this sheet to the final exam.

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF CLASSES AND GROUPS

## 101E (Experimental)

	Name Codes	Sex	Age	Major	English ACT	HS English GPA	Composite ACT	HS GPA
1.	366913221181	M	19	Business	20	2.3	20	2.24
2.	255213224381	M	18	Ag.; Wrest.	24	3	25	3.26
3.	453513134381	F	17	Business	22	3	20	3.20
4.	304213133281	F	18	Social Work	—	3	—	3.09
5.	960913234481	M	18	Business	21	4	23	3.88
6.	553513234481	M	18	Music	19	1.7	15	2.33
7.	565413123381	F	18	Social Work	17	3	19	3.25
8.	238113135481	F	18	Architect	23	3.3	22	3.73
9.	447913133481	F	18	Accountant	310 (SAT)	3	16	3.40
10.	763113224481	M	18	Accountant	15	1.7	16	1.84
11.	823413134481	F	18	Broadcasting	14	3	13	3.12
12.	214813234381	M	18	Accounting	23	4	24	3.54
13.	259113213481	M	18	Computer	420 (SAT)	—	18	3.08
14.	179213213381	M	18	Baseball	20	2.7	21	2.65
15.	241913123381	F	18	Music	400 (SAT)	2.7	17	2.50
16.	273413134281	F	18	Secretary	310 (SAT)	2.3	9	2.58
17.	523513133381	F	18	Social Work	17	2.7	15	2.69
18.	366713224481	M	19	Computer	15	2	21	2.95
19.	369413134381	F	18	Counciling	390 (SAT)	3	18	2.40
20.	372213123381	F	18	Social Work	18	2	18	1.71
21.	987013234481	M	19	Uncertain	19	2.3	19	2.60
22.	590813134481	F	18	P.E.	300 (SAT)	2.7	8	3.08
23.	500113134481	F	18	Social Work	13	3.3	13	3.13
24.	137713236681	M	19	Counciling	22	4	26	3.58
25.	371013234381	M	19	Accountant	14	2.7	18	3.13
26.	113313235581	M	18	Accountant	22	3	21	3.36
27.	343513133381	F	18	Secretary	15	1.7	13	1.95
28.	447913233281	M	18	Business	210 (SAT)	2.3	200 (SAT)	2.67

## 101F (Experimental)

	Name Codes	Sex	Age	Major	English ACT	HS English GPA	Composite ACT	HS GPA
1.	336714134481	F	18	Christian Ed	23	3.7	24	3.75
2.	702914133381	F	18	Music	23	3	19	1.85
3.	440044133281	F	18	Nursing	13	2.3	19	2.35
4.	611714234481	M	18	Clergy	20	2.7	23	1.93
5.	145314245581	M	20	Marine Bio.	380 (SAT)	2.3	15	2.49
6.	276114144481	F	18	Med. Sec.	17	3	14	2.97
7.	337614134381	F	18	Bus. Ad.	20	3	19	2.45
8.	329714135481	F	18	Med. Sec.	20	3.3	22	3.23
9.	366314123381	F	18	Education	12	2.7	11	2.95
10.	475614222281	M	20	Law Enf.	18	2	12	2.40
11.	344714235481	M	18	Business	22	3.3	21	2.97
12.	477814235481	M	18	Law Enf.	10	2.3	11	2.69
13.	694714143381	F	18	Christian Ed.	21	2.3	16	2.40
14.	384514133381	F	18	Com. Service	22	3.3	17	2.90
15.	661114234381	M	18	Music	18	2.3	21	2.72
16.	334114233381	M	18	Comm.	—	2.3	—	2.67
17.	251614214381	M	18	Bus. Ad.	20	2.3	22	2.62
18.	396414233381	M	19	Rec. Ther.	19	2.3	10	2.00
19.	585514234481	M	18	Biology	300 (SAT)	2	14	2.50
20.	254814133381	F	18	Music	470 (SAT)	2.7	17	3.00
21.	284614134381	F	19	Coaching	23	3.7	21	3.40
22.	049414235581	M	18	Computer	21	3.3	27	3.03

	Name Codes	Sex	Age	Major	English ACT	HS English GPA	Composite ACT	HS GPA
1.	244916133381	F	18	Law Enf.	14	2.7	14	2.24
2.	082416234481	M	18	Ed (History)	18	3.3	24	3.41
3.	243216133381	F	18	Com. Service	15	2	12	2.47
4.	329716234481	M	18	Adv.	13	3	18	3.23
5.	336216234581	M	18	Business	18	3	22	2.79
6.	301716134481	F	18	Psychology	16	2	15	1.89
7.	928216134481	F	18	Vet. Med.	21	4	24	3.85
8.	613016223481	M	18	Math & Ag.	24	4	28	3.81
9.	551716234481	M	18	Business	380 (SAT)	3	20	2.97
10.	264116133381	F	18	Social Work	10	2	11	2.09
11.	483716134481	F	19	Secretary	18	2.7	15	2.95
12.	321816236681	M	18	Medicine	24	3.7	26	3.60
13.	437516223481	M	18	Engineering	19	3.7	23	3.38
14.	210116134481	F	18	Social Work	18	3	16	2.07
15.	565216134381	F	18	Ed. Education	20	2	20	2.25
16.	650217234481	M	18	Business	16	1.7	17	2.02
17.	553816134481	F	18	Wildlife Mgt.	24	2.3	21	3.18
18.	491316223481	M	18	Ath. Trainer	20	3	24	2.85
19.	554116145581	F	18	Sp. & Drama	17	2.7	16	2.54
20.	073016234381	M	18	Business	22	4	25	3.78
21.	423216233381	M	18	Business	22	2.3	21	2.68
22.	323016123381	F	18	Biology	18	3	15	3.11
23.	524816212381	M	18	Business	16	2.3	17	2.19
24.	697416124481	F	18	Phys. Ther.	12	2.3	15	2.39
25.	403216124381	F	18	Music	24	3.3	27	3.40
26.	588616113381	F	18	Social Work	17	2.7	12	2.72
27.	357716212281	M	18	Mech. Engin.	310 (SAT)	1.7	17	2.50
28.	357916233481	M	18	Govt.	390 (SAT)	2.7	17	2.17



## 101H (Control)

	Name Codes	Sex	Age	Major	English ACT	HS English GPA	Composite ACT	HS GPA
1.	57401713381	F	18	Social Work	17	2.7	19	2.74
2.	272717123481	F	18	Bus. Ad.	22	3	22	3.10
3.	616417233381	M	18	Ger-Biology	16	2.3	15	2.39
4.	285117234481	M	19	Chiropractic	12	2	11	2.35
5.	367117133481	F	18	Music	18	3.7	17	2.57
6.	248117134381	F	18	Med. Sec.	310 (SAT)	3.3	610 (SAT)	2.66
7.	445417134381	F	18	Acct./Bus.	24	4	23	3.96
8.	970617123381	F	18	Business	—	4	—	—
9.	455817233281	M	19	Ind. Arts	21	2.3	20	1.97
10.	290517224481	M	20	Ag./Aviation	19	2	16	2.67
11.	620717222281	M	18	Acct.	13	2	20	2.45
12.	424917235481	M	18	Art/Spanish	23	3.3	22	2.85
13.	508417233481	M	19	Ag.	20	2.7	16	2.67
14.	706716223381	M	18	Architecture	19	2	23	2.44
15.	348117235581	M	18	Art	21	3.3	27	3.61
16.	499717134381	F	18	Ed. Ed./Psych.	24	3.7	27	3.32
17.	275417124381	F	18	Secretary	16	3	13	2.62
18.	225017134481	F	18	Music	17	3.3	14	2.92
19.	396817134481	F	18	Computer	21	3	23	2.93
20.	371117222281	M	18	Business	19	2.3	17	2.20

## APPENDIX C

### DATA TABLES

Table 9  
Ages of Each Class and Group

	Mean Age	S.D.
Control Classes		
10lg	18.04	.19
10lh	18.25	.55
Control Group	18.13	.39
Experimental Classes		
10le	18.14	.45
10lf	18.27	.63
Experimental Group	18.2	.53

Table 10  
Career Interests of Each Class and Group

	Bus.	Sci.	Edu.	Soc.	Mus.	Sec.
Control Groups						
10lg	8	5	3	5	1	1
10lh	5	3	4	1	2	2
Control Group	13	8	7	6	3	3
Experimental Classes						
10le	8	4	2	5	2	2
10lf	3	4	4	1	3	2
Experimental Group	11	8	6	6	5	4

Table 11

English ACT and English GPA of Each Class and Group

	Mean	<u>ACT</u> S.D.	Mean	<u>GPA</u> S.D.
Control Classes				
101g	18.24	3.85	2.79	.69
101h	19	3.43	2.84	.64
Control Group	18.56	3.66	2.81	.66
Experimental Classes				
101e	18.65	3.7	2.76	.65
101f	19	3.84	2.73	.53
Experimental Group	18.82	3.74	2.74	.595

Table 12

Composite ACT and High School GPA of Each Class and Group

	Mean	<u>ACT</u> S.D.	Mean	<u>GPA</u> S.D.
Control Classes				
101g	19	4.82	2.80	.58
101h	19.17	5.67	2.76	.48
Control Group	19.07	5.11	2.79	.53
Experimental Classes				
101e	18	4.52	2.91	.58
101f	17.86	4.69	2.69	.47
Experimental Group	17.94	4.55	2.81	.54

APPENDIX D

APPREHENSION TEST

## Apprehension Test

Name:  
Date:  
Section:

Directions: Below are a series of statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. While some of these statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. I avoid writing.   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.                                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.                |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.                                     |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.                 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10. I like to write my ideas down.  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.          |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.                             |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 13. I'm nervous about writing.  |

- |           |     |   |
|-----------|-----|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 14. | People seem to enjoy what I write.  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 15. | I enjoy writing.  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 16. | I never seem to be able to clearly write<br>down my ideas.                |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 17. | Writing is a lot of fun.  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 18. | I expect to do poorly in composition<br>classes even before I enter them. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 19. | I like seeing my thoughts on paper.                                       |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 20. | Discussing my writing with others is an<br>enjoyable experience.          |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 21. | I have a terrible time organizing my ideas<br>in a composition course.    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 22. | When I hand in a composition I know I'm<br>going to do poorly.            |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 23. | It's easy for me to write good<br>compositions.                           |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 24. | I don't think I write as well as most other<br>people.                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 25. | I don't like my compositions to be<br>evaluated.                          |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 26. | I'm no good at writing.   |

APPENDIX E

SCORING SHEET



## Scoring Sheet

Title:									
Content/ Focus									
Voice/Aud									
Org/Coh									
Mech/Style									
Total:									

6 =  
5 =  
4 =  
3 =  
2 =  
1 =

Title:									
Content/ Focus									
Voice/Aud									
Org/Coh									
Mech/Style									
Total:									

Title:									
Content/ Focus									
Voice/Aud									
Org/Coh									
Mech/Style									
Total:									

APPENDIX F

ESSAYS

## Anchors

## Transcript of the "6" Anchor

## The Pajama Party

Being on the working staff for a high school yearbook requires a lot of time, talent, and creativity on the part of each member. When I was a junior, registering for senior classes, I decided to tackle that challenge and sign up for Yearbook. In past years, I had looked in high school annuals, flipping page by page, seeing the events and memories of yesteryear pop out and come to life. After reading, I would notice the credit page and realize that many people devoted many hours to produce this publication. Now, as I was involving myself in this project, I knew that it would require time, talent, creativity, and flexibility on my part.

My editor was a bubbly, creative person with many lively ideas. Her spark and wild thoughts always produced laughter; and often times, crazy looks and bewilderment from the staff.

Once our theme was chosen, assignments were given and "extras" needed to be decided upon. To enliven our assigned pages, Julie, the editor would help us with headlines, captions and copy. There was never a dull moment as Julie thought up headlines such as "Spies, flies, and crooked ties" and "Blood, sweat, and cheers." Her determination for a well-written book shone through her efforts of teaching us

to write effective headlines and captions; in addition to her constant revision of our copy to insure perfection.

Julie also had ideas for a senior "color" section and for our cover, but these "extras" required "extra" money. So what did Julie think up this time? A pajama party! She explained that each staff member would carry around an empty peanut butter jar for one week to collect donations from students, who would dare that staff person to wear their pajamas to school for a whole day. When a jar became full, that person would have to wear their pajamas to school. Publicity of the event sparked slogans such as, "This year's yearbook staff is not asleep" and "This year's yearbook will not put you to sleep!" With the campaign underway, money was collected. After one week of fundraising, each staff member emptied the contents of his/her jar and counted the money. Whoever received five dollars or more was the lucky individual to wear sleeping attire to school. Of course, I was one of the five precious few to be "bought" into this situation.

When the "big" day arrived, I got out of the car reluctantly; since I was anticipating the comments and feelings of the day. Walking inside toward my locker, I could feel eyes staring at my every step. Nearing my locker, I saw Mary, a fellow yearbook person, with her pajamas on. This helped me to feel a bit more comfortable. Opening my locker, I slipped my coat off, took

my shoes off, and put my "booties" on. From then on, it was quite an eventful day.

Many grins and comments came my way, but after awhile, I began to enjoy this attention. Even so, I continued with the normal routine of the day. It was unique though, since I interviewed my principal and janitors for my yearbook assignment, and even had a test. What an unusual way to look at a time like that!

Once home from school, I told my mom about the day and could laugh about it, for now it was just another memory. For the rest of the year, nothing could be as crazy and unusual as wearing my pajamas in front of all my fellow classmates.

From this experience, I learned that there will always be people that have wild and crazy ideas. Unfortunately, many hesitate to follow them. If they could only be acted upon, a memory could be made. Most often times, these ideas will receive the oddest look from a person, but they do catch attention. From this, people remember these events and often times, they are the most cherished memories.

---

Transcript of the "5" Anchor

#### Acceptance

I grew up in a relatively small community with a population of about 2700. The kids that I went to high school with, except for a few, had known me all of my

life. We had started kindergarten together, and at the time this incidence took place, we were starting our senior year of high school together. By this time, they knew me pretty well, and I knew them well also. To them, I was the "straightest" kid in the class, a "prude". I didn't smoke, I didn't drink, I didn't date (at least to their knowledge), I liked teachers, and I got good grades.

The only time I was anyone's "best" friend was when she needed help or advice. For the most part I was happy; I knew I wasn't part of the "inner circle," and although I wanted to be popular, I didn't want popularity because of the things I did or didn't do, I wanted (and still want) people to like me for myself.

The first week of school had gone by, and we, as a class were beginning to realize all that being seniors entailed, all of the work we were expected to do, as well as some of the fun stuff that came with being at the top. I was still on the outer edge of some of the cliques, but other groups were slowly allowing me into their presence. I was to receive the "key" to the door over Labor Day weekend, or rather, my classmates were to discover that I wasn't quite what they thought I was.

On a golden September Saturday just before Labor Day, I surprised some of my classmates. I showed up at an open-air gospel-rock concert with a boyfriend. I was surprised to see that particular group of girls at a gospel concert, but

said nothing about it. Because they were obviously curious about Dan, I introduced him to them. We visited with them and then went to our seats.

Back at school on Tuesday, I was surrounded during lunch and was thoroughly interrogated about "my man." They wanted to know where I had "picked him up," how long we had been dating, where he was from, and all the other details they could get out of me. I talked, smiled and laughed with the girls and told them about Dan.

From that day on, I was allowed into the closed circle of the girls in my class. I was one of them, because I had a boyfriend. Of course not just anyone with a boyfriend was let into that clique, not only did I have to have a boyfriend, he had to measure up to the standards of the clique. He had to be athletic, "handsome" (of course), friendly with my "friends" of the clique, but "true" to me. Evidently, Dan measured up, and I was part of the group.

No longer did I sit at home week nights, or weekends. There was always something going on at someone's house. If it happened to be a weekend that the boys weren't available, the girls did things without them.

This sudden acceptance of me by the girls in my class because of the appearance of a boyfriend was sort of comical to me. I had not changed - I still didn't smoke or drink, and I still liked my teachers and got good grades. Now the

only difference was that I dated. My girl friends couldn't accept me for what I was, they wanted me to be just like they themselves were.

It made no difference to them that I, as a person, really hadn't changed, now they could identify with, and accept me because I had something in common with them, a boyfriend.

---

#### Transcript of the "4" Anchor

##### Jealousy: A Time to Win and a Time to Lose

It was my junior year in high school and my first year in track, when an experience happened to me that changed my life in a matter of weeks.

I was a rather fast young man and one day in gym class our track coach spotted me running. He approached me and indicated that I had some potential and should be out for track. I told him I would think it over and get back to him within the week. With a little thinking and some persuasion by my friends, I agreed to go out for the track team.

The season started and I was doing fairly well in the open mile. After a few weeks my coach put me in the two mile relay team of which one of my best friends, Todd, was the star half miler. We started out really good, getting some first place ribbons and metals, but after awhile I noticed that I was no longer getting the glory I had gotten when I was the star openmiler. Todds time was quicker than



mine and he was the one getting the applause of the coach and the rest of the team.

This went on for a few weeks, during which time, I was becoming very jealous. My attitude toward Todd became very sour and I even began telling bad things about him behind his back. As a result of my terrible attitude toward my teammate, I began slacking off on my running, making our relay time go up thus making us lose to our competition. I thought this might take away some of Todds glory, but after doing this a few times my coach pulled me off the team for good.

I sulked about it for a while and then I realized what I had done. My jealousy wasn't just hurting Todds glory, it was hurting the whole track team by bringing down the team's points, and to think I almost lost my best friend because he could run faster than me. It took me awhile to make amends with Todd and the rest of the team, but I did and now we're back to being best friends again. In three weeks I learned one of the best lessons of my life. Jealousy can effect more than just a few.

---

Transcript of the "3" Anchor

This essay was given no title.

From the first moment I saw Tammie I knew I was not going to like her. This girl just looked like a brat. I had to sit next to her in our freshman clothing class and

for quite a while we didn't even look at each other. Just being in her presents made me sick. How was I going to stand it for a whole year, I thought to myself.

This girl Tammie wined constanlly and I didn't think she had an ounce of brain in her head. She was always cutting the patterns wrong or sewing the wrong sides of the material together. She even sewed her project to the sleeve of the shirt she had on once.

Well a few weeks lator I was asked to go to a basketball game a school with a friend who was very close to me and when she came to pick me up who should be in the back seet but this dumb, dingy Tammie chic. What could I do but be nice to her? She was a friend of my friends so I guessed I had at least be civilized to her.

To make a long story short, Tammie turned out to be really nice and we've been close friends for a long time now.

By this little story I wanted to make a point, that being, You can't judge a book by it's cover.

I hope this illustration will help you to realize you can't judge someone without finding out what there really like inside.

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## Transcript of the "2" Anchor

### Leadership

I was elected Vice-President of our Jr. High to represent the students of my class, and student activities that take place. Being a member of the council required leadership and responsibility towards class activities, in and out of school. While serving on the council I met and learned a great deal of people, while at the same time helped them out.

Becoming Vice President, I felt that I owed my classmates the responsibility, and leadership throughout the year. I think the biggest part of what I learned was the leadership among others, hoping that they may examine your example, and learn from it. Being responsible while also aid in the many events that face us from day to day. Meeting new people is always a thrill for me, asking there name and were there from help you to get to know people quicker. When I first came to Waldorf, meeting, seeing new faces seemed different, but after awhile it all worked out.

The only way anyone can open themselves to life and people around, is by getting involved with activities and sharing among others your thoughts and ideas by getting involved. Ive only been up here at school for four days, and have already gotten involved in music tryouts and sport activities, each one a seperate challenge in its own. Yes

looking back to the student council helps me to think of what leadership is all about, and how I can use the experience to make myself a better leader among the community.

---

Transcript of the "1" Anchor

Try-Outs

During my sixth grade a girl moved into town named Starla. She was a very pretty girl. She was also very popular until her Jr. High years. At Jr. High a bunch of us girls went out for cheerleading. Most of us practised as much as possible. There were a few however who just goofed off. One of them was Starla. The day of try-outs everybody was really nervous. We all relizzed it was going to be tough. Starlas' turn finilly came and did she goof up. She had forgotten all the cheers and jumps. After try-outs us girls went back to class to wait to see who had made it.

During fifth hour our principal announced who had made cheerleaders. There were quite a few surprised girls when we learned that Starla was a cheerleader.

After that Starla started hanging around with only the popular kids. It got to be that if you weren't popular she wouldn't even look at you. Many of us girls soon lost respect for her. We also learned that being popular was really not so important as making the right kind of friends.\*

\*This essay was printed rather than in cursive.

APPENDIX G

PRE- AND POST-TEST ESSAY AND  
APPREHENSION SCORES

Table 13  
Pre- and Post-test Essay and Apprehension Scores

<u>Experimental Group (101e)</u>					<u>Control Group (101g)</u>				
Code*	Essay		Apprehension		Code	Essay		Apprehension	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-		Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
1	7	7	53	94	1	4	9	100	100
2	8	5	82	84	2	4	5	88	103
3	7	5	90	86	3	4	5	66	68
4	5	8	88	95	4	3	4	90	106
5	7	10	83	106	5	3	2	89	87
6	4	5	92	98	6	6	6	78	90
7	8	6	73	92	7	7	7	72	81
8	5	10	96	93	8	7	5	73	78
9	6	10	79	86	9	6	6	86	82
10	4	3	64	80	10	5	6	71	88
11	6	8	75	77	11	5	6	110	126
12	6	5	94	104	12	6	8	69	84
13	4	6	74	88	13	6	7	77	95
14	3	4	30	39	14	5	5	77	72
15	5	5	87	93	15	5	5	71	104
16	7	12	84	99	16	4	6	78	73
17	6	7	72	98	17	5	4	80	91
18	3	2	70	93	18	7	5	95	93
19	7	9	86	72	19	5	6	91	98
20	2	4	63	61	20	7	7	84	85
21	4	6	98	98	21	5	8	69	89
22	3	6	81	74	22	6	5	51	83
23	6	5	76	87	23	8	7	72	69
24	8	6	97	92	24	11	12	70	79
25	4	6	79	90	25	5	8	50	53
26	5	7	83	87	26	4	4	50	61
27	3	6	86	87	27	7	7	67	52
28	4	4	68	66	28	4	6	90	106

\*For brevity, the code has been abbreviated on this and the following page to the number's preceding the name codes in Appendix A.

Table 13 (continued)

<u>Experimental Group (10lf)</u>					<u>Control Group (10lh)</u>				
Code*	Essay		Apprehension		Code	Essay		Apprehension	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-		Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
1	5	10	90	99	1	4	8	76	56
2	9	11	106	123	2	6	7	64	60
3	5	5	82	81	3	4	6	72	81
4	6	8	106	96	4	4	6	102	106
5	4	8	111	123	5	7	5	83	101
6	9	8	97	102	6	6	4	87	76
7	6	9	95	103	7	7	12	103	108
8	7	7	89	75	8	3	5	58	77
9	4	7	65	62	9	3	5	74	83
10	4	4	73	72	10	7	4	66	84
11	8	7	100	—*	11	5	6	58	83
12	5	3	74	77	12	6	10	98	110
13	11	6	110	113	13	5	4	78	88
14	5	5	82	84	14	4	7	78	89
15	7	4	94	100	15	7	5	77	95
16	6	5	92	88	16	10	10	102	114
17	4	5	71	78	17	6	4	58	49
18	4	7	69	77	18	7	8	109	109
19	4	2	92	101	19	8	6	91	98
20	6	7	88	89	20	5	5	55	58
21	6	10	82	73					
22	6	5	95	102					

\*This student's scores were excluded from the final tabulations.